GABRIELE ROSSETTI

BY

W. M. ROSSETTI

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GABRIELE ROSSETTI

DRAWING BY GABRIELE ROSSETTI
Pen and Sepia

GABRIELE ROSSETTI

A VERSIFIED AUTOBIOGRAPHY

TRANSLATED
AND SUPPLEMENTED BY
WILLIAM MICHAEL ROSSETTI

SANDS & CO
12 BURLEIGH STREET STRAND
LONDON
1901

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Così dall' arpa opposti suoni ei desta
Pel suol che gli diè culla un suon d'affanno
Di gioia un suon per quel che asil gli presta
G R

SANDS & CO
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ANTONIO AND OLIVIA AGRESTI

WHOSE MARRIAGE HAS RESTORED
TO ITALIAN NATIONALITY
A GRAND-DAUGHTER OF
GABRIELE ROSSETTI

PREFACE

In Italy the poems of Gabriele Rossetti have enjoyed a large amount of celebrity, and they are still held in honoured remembrance; his prose works are there known rather by rumour than in perusal. In England the case of the prose works is much the same, while the poems are as good as unknown. His life has never been written on any very complete scale. In Italian there are some Memoirs, more or less detailed and accurate—perhaps the most solid is that written by my cousin Teodorico Pietrocola-Rossetti; in English, the nearest approach to an account of him may be what appears in the course of my *Memoir of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (1895). There is also some important information in the book, *John Hookham Frere and his Friends*, mentioned on p. 132 of the present volume.

The name of Gabriele Rossetti has in this country secured some amount of respectful regard, but rather on adventitious than on strictly personal grounds. He is contemplated in his paternal relation—the father of Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti. Dr Garnett, in his *History of Italian Literature*, has expressed the point neatly, and in terms stronger than it would behove me to use: "Rossetti assuredly will not be forgotten by England, for which he has done what no other

inhabitant of these isles ever did, in begetting two great poets."

On me it can be no less than a filial obligation to do what I can for the memory of my patriotic, highly gifted, laborious, and loving father. I therefore offer to the British public the following authentic record of him, and leave it to obtain such readers as it may.

W. M. ROSSETTI.

LONDON, *January* 1901.

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GABRIELE ROSSETTI

As the career of Gabriele Rossetti was much mixed up with political and dynastic events in the Kingdom of Naples (or of the Two Sicilies), it may be as well at starting to give a very brief *résumé* of historical facts.

In the year 1734 the Kingdom of Naples, in the resettlement of Europe consequent upon the Treaty of Utrecht, was under the dominion of the Empire, or, as we should now word it, of Austria; but in that year an almost bloodless conquest brought-in a different dynasty. Charles, Duke of Parma, a son of the Bourbon King of Spain, Philip V., by his second wife Elizabeth Farnese, a spirited youth only seventeen years of age, determined to assert his ancestral claims upon the kingdom, and in a trice he was firmly seated upon the Neapolitan throne. His government, though in a sense despotic, was popular and enlightened. In 1759 he became by succession King of Spain; and, under the obligation of existing treaties, he relinquished the Kingdom of Naples to his third

son, Ferdinand, aged only eight. In 1768 Ferdinand married Maria Caroline, daughter of the Emperor Francis and of Maria Theresa, and sister of Marie Antoinette.

Ferdinand IV., as he was then termed (afterwards Ferdinand I.) was a man of no great ability, but of vigorous physique, and sufficiently well-disposed as a sovereign; his wife, strong-minded and domineering, was the more active governor of the two, and promoted various innovations, some of which fairly counted as reforms. Things went on well enough for the rulers and the subjects until the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, when Neapolitan opposition to France and all things French became pronounced. Queen Caroline naturally did not relish the decapitation of her sister in 1793, and hostilities against the Republic ensued. In 1798 the king decamped to Sicily, and in the following year his continental dominions became the "Parthenopean Republic." This was of short duration, January to June 1799. The Southern provinces rose in arms, under the leadership of Cardinal Ruffo; the French army departed, and Ferdinand was re-installed in Naples — Lord Nelson, victorious from the Battle of the Nile, playing a large part, and a much-debated one, in this transaction. Ferdinand now ruled with

great rigour, and committed some barbaric acts of repression and retaliation, for which his consort was regarded as gravely responsible. The great Napoleon, Consul, Emperor, and King of Italy, was not likely to tolerate for long the anti-French severities, demonstrations, and intrigues, of "il Rè Nasone," as Ferdinand was nicknamed in virtue of his portentously long and prominent nose. Early in 1806 Ferdinand and Caroline disappeared once more into Sicily, under British protection, and Joseph Bonaparte was enthroned in Naples. Joseph, in 1808, was transferred to the Spanish kingdom; and Joachim Murat, brother-in-law of Napoleon and of Joseph by his marriage with their sister Caroline, reigned in Naples in his stead. Ferdinand, with the other Caroline, remained meanwhile unattackable in Sicily, and was turned into a constitutional king there by British predominance. In 1815, on the final collapse of the Napoleonic *régime*, and very shortly after the death of his Queen, he returned to Naples.

These particulars, meagre as they are, seem to be sufficient to show what was the historical background to the fortunes of Gabriele Rossetti, with whom alone I am directly concerned. He was born under a recently-established dynasty, in a kingdom of despotic

rule and many relics of feudalism; from the age of twenty-three to thirty-two he was the subject of a new and intrusive dynasty, not less despotic, but free from all trammels inherited from the past. Then in 1815 he again came under the old system, but in a state of public feeling and aspiration which rapidly led to a constitutional government, sworn to by the sovereign, and abolished by him at the first opportunity.

I propose to relate my father's life in his own verse as translated by me, supplemented by a little of my prose. It was towards the year 1850, when his general health and strength had grievously decayed, and he was conscious of the imminent approaches of death, that he composed a versified autobiography, of which the great majority is here embodied. He wrote it in rhymed sextets; but I, for ease and literality, have rendered it into blank verse. His own verse is, as he himself acknowledges, here pitched in a very subdued key, with little endeavour after poetic elevation; though there are some passages in a higher strain. My translation makes still less pretension as poetry; it conveys the sense with strict accuracy, and that is all it affects. My father retained in his old age some of the habits of "poetic diction" which had been

customary in the Italy of his youth; and one finds here more than one quite wants of Phœbus, Neptune, Minerva's fane, and other "rattle-traps of mythology" (to borrow a phrase from William Blake); in all this I follow my original. The versification of the Italian text is often ingenious, and even masterly; abounding in dactylic line-endings, or *rime sdrucciole*, as the Italians call them—a difficult feat, at which Rossetti was uncommonly deft. I have given the great bulk of the production—which, indeed, I had in the first instance translated in full; but eventually I thought some passages here and there, and also some amplifications of phrase, useless for the purposes of the British reader, and have therefore excluded them. The whole of the expressly biographical matter is preserved. Those notes which are not marked by an initial are my father's own; those to which "W." is appended are mine—there being several points which seemed to need some explanation.

My material does not call for much division or subdivision. I shall therefore simply separate it into the Life of Gabriele Rossetti (his full Christian names were Gabriele Pasquale Giuseppe) in Italy, and his Life in Exile, Malta and England; and, plunging at once into the versified autobiography, I commence the

LIFE IN ITALY

I know my fame will have but scanty flight,
Readers to whom I speak of Italy.
Yet, if in any of you there rose a wish
To know me who I am, I'll meet it here.
Ovid's own native soil is mine as well:
He spoke about himself, and so will I.
In verses Ovid wrote, but I in prose—
Prose of eleven syllables with rhymes;
But, be they verses, I shall not contest.
And, without more preamble, hear me now.

Along the beach of the Frentani lies
On teeming hills, the Adriatic near,
A small municipality of Rome—
Histonium once and Vasto now 'tis called.
There, with no waft of Fortune, I received
A humble cradle from a worthy pair.*

The brief statement of my father, in his verses and his note, may be slightly extended. Nicola Rossetti was a blacksmith and locksmith; his wife, Maria Fran-

* Of Nicola Rossetti and Francesca Pietrocola, a respected married couple, I was born in Vasto, a city in Abruzzo Citeriore, in the year 1783. My brothers, all senior to me, were Andrea, Antonio, and Domenico. The first, admired for his pulpit-eloquence, became a Canon of the Collegiate Church of St Mary, the principal church in the city. The other two, endowed with much poetical talent, have left good evidence of this in their compositions. I had also three sisters—Angiola Maria, Maria Giuseppe, and Maria Michele. The first died unmarried; the other two married.

cesca Pietrocola, was the daughter of a shoemaker. Both families seem to have held a creditable, though certainly a by no means distinguished, position in the small Vastese community. The original name of the Rossetti race (as I have heard my father more than once affirm) was not Rossetti but Della Guardia. Some babies in the Della Guardia family were born with red or reddish hair (I presume, four or five generations before my father's birth); and the Vastese—who, like other Italians, never lose a chance of calling people by nicknames—termed them "the Rossetti"—*i.e.* "The Little Reds," and this continued to serve as surname for their progeny. Thus the surname Rossetti may be regarded as equivalent to the English surname Reddish, or Rudkins (if Rudkins is an abbreviation of Ruddykins). The family of Della Guardia still exists in Vasto. It appears to have been entitled to bear a crest—which is a sturdy-looking tree, with the motto "Frangas non flectas"; for a seal (still in my possession), showing this crest and motto, was delivered to Gabriele Rossetti, on his quitting Vasto in youth, by his elder brother the Canon Andrea, who told him that it was the family-device. This was often used, I may add, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. It appears that in the Rossetti line, or else in the Della

Guardia line, there must have been some degree of literary eminence prior to the date of the blacksmith Nicola; as I find, in a letter addressed by Gabriele Rossetti, towards 1807, to his elder brother Domenico, the phrase: "You know that our stock has always abounded in great men of letters." One cannot suppose that this statement is a mere fib: I have not, however, found any confirmation of it in books about Vasto, nor do I remember that my father ever referred to such a matter by word of mouth.

I believe that Nicola Rossetti came to his end in a distressing way. When the French Republican army invaded the Neapolitan territory in 1798, the troops required Nicola to render some service, such as horse-shoeing, provisioning, transport, or what not. He showed no inclination to comply, and was beaten or otherwise ill-treated; and this so preyed on his mind that his health suffered, and death ensued. His decease may, I presume, have occurred towards 1800; his widow survived till 1822 or some such date. Gabriele Rossetti used to speak with much affection of his mother, who (like so many Italian women of the lower middle class in those days) could neither write nor read. He remembered his father as a somewhat harsh man, but upright and worthy of respect.

The Rossetti family is now wholly extinct, save in the persons of myself and my four children; the line of my father's married sisters is also extinct.

The precise date of my father's birth was 28th February 1783 (not 1st March, as has at times been written and printed). He was born in a lofty brown building, which, in a water-colour with which I was favoured towards the date of the Vastese centenary celebration of his birth, wears a somewhat stately though wholly unadorned aspect. It looks like an edifice which has stood for some centuries, solid but uncared for. It is now, I understand, a dilapidated structure, let out in tenements to a poor class of people. The question of buying it for the city of Vasto, in memory of Gabriele Rossetti, has often been mooted, but not carried into effect. There are prophets who have no honour in their own country; and others who, rather profusely honoured there by word of mouth, are left in the lurch when deeds and subscriptions are in demand.

> In the first opening years of joyousness
> I showed clear sign of studious aptitude;
> And, following my brothers, three in count,
> Whose lively parts had been in evidence,

I was escorted by this goodly three
Into Apollo's and Minerva's fane.*

Thrilled by the first Phœbean impulses,
Rough versicles I traced with facile hand:
And yet, to my surprise, those lines of mine
Almost took wing into a distant flight.
A hope of Pindus did I hear me named:
But praise increased my ardour, not my pride.
And yet some vanity there came and mixed
With the fair issue of my preluding:
But, all the more I heard the applause increase,
With equal force did study grow in me.
Not surely that I tried to load my page
With pomp abstruse extraneous to my drift;
But counterwise each image and each rhyme,
The more spontaneous, so meseemed more fair.
In trump of gold and in the oaten pipe
Let some seek the sublime, I seek for ease.
I shunned those verses which sprawl forth untuned
Even from my days of schoolboy tutelage:
I know they please some people, but not me:
Admiring Dante, Metastasio
I laud; and hold—a true Italian ear
Must not admit one inharmonious verse.
Some lines require a very surgeon's hand

* I had various masters in the first rudiments of literature; but none was of so much benefit to me as the one who started me in "philosophy," and who also nurtured in me the taste for poetry. He was a Regular Priest of that province, and he died in Naples at a somewhat early age. I shall always bless the name of Padre Vincenzo Gaetani.

To make them upon crutches stand afoot.
So be they! But, to set them musical,
They must, by Heaven, be in themselves a song.
This seems a truthful, not a jibing, rule—
Music and lyric are a twinborn thing.
Yet think not that I deem me satisfied
With upblown empty sound without ideas:—
Then will a harmony be beautiful
When great emotions and great thoughts it stirs.

To painting with an equal ardency
An almost sudden impulse led me on;
And with the pen I drew in such a mode
That all my work would look as if engraved.
To question what I say would nothing serve,
For on my hands more than one proof remains.*
A plaining ditty which describes my state,
And wherein I deplore my fate perverse,
And whose adorning is two pen-designs,
Is still preserved among my earliest scraps:

* Now on *my* hands: one specimen forms our frontispiece. I have spoken of this matter in my *Memoir of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, pp. 5 and 6, and I know that my father's statement concerning it is not exaggerated. He executed also, towards 1804, a miniature of himself, of which, writing to his brother Domenico, he speaks in the following terms:—"A miniature portrait of myself, the work of my own hand when I exercised myself much in the fine art which imitates visible truths. I was at that time fresher-looking, and perhaps rather plumper, and slightly paler; before the sanguine-choleric temperament obtained the mastery in me with that vigour which it now displays. All who have seen it aver that it is truly myself." This miniature used once to be in the possession of a Signora Vezzi of Parma: I know not where it may now be.—W.

And many more, for him who disbelieves,
Can thoroughly attest what I aver.

Not every magnate takes to banqueting,
Or lust of Cyprus and Pentapolis.
The Marchese di Vasto, a high-placed lord,
The King of Naples' Majordomo in Chief
(Whatever face he show in history,
By me his memory must be always blest),
Being once in company with men of mark
Whom he was wont to invite from time to time,—
My verses read by him, and drawings seen—
Felt pleased that I was of his vassalage;
He wrote to his agent telling him of this
And bidding him to send me on to Naples.*

There I was patronized, without parade,
By him, who from the first received me well:
But little did that firm support endure,
For a political whirlwind cut it short.
Poor I—how fare in a vast capital?
I had to bow before my destinies.
For scarcely had a year and month elapsed,
In which new studies occupied my mind,
When the French army of invasion came
In the sixth year of this our century,—
And, seeking Sicily in urgent flight,
The Marquis vanished with the perjured King.

* The Marquis who brought me to Naples was Tommaso, of the famous and very ancient house of D'Avalos, which was transplanted from Spain to Italy. [It was the same family as that into which the sixteenth-century poetess, Vittoria Colonna, beloved by Michelangelo, married.—W.]

Then for the kingdom rose an altered time,
And all the people vied to give it hail,
For they abhorred that Bourbon void of faith,
With executions and with treasons smirched,—
And more his wife, a type unparagoned,
Megæra, Alecto, and Tisiphone.
I will not paint that husband and his wife—
Thank Heaven, the tomb has swallowed them ere now.
Their grandson—this suffices—pairs them both,
Re-named King Bomba, monster in human form.

On saddened brows a few, and many glad,
I read the souls of men enslaved or free:
And, mixed myself 'mid such conflicting minds,
Judge you if I was joyful or was grieved.
The festive thundering of the martial forts
Responded to by frequent trumpet-call,
Cheers that were uttered by a thousand mouths
As the tricoloured banner came in view,
And hurly-burly weltering all around,
Opposed enormous joy to enormous grief.
Yet thoughts, more than enough, ominous and black,
Whispered me somewhile 'mid those shouts of joy:
"My hapless country, what dost thou acclaim,
Now that one despot goes and one arrives?
Ah on thy shoulders still I find the yoke:
They doff the old one and they don the new."
And from my heart the words leapt to my lips:
"To call this liberty were sure a jibe!
As Ferdinand in Naples stifled her,
So Bonaparte butchered her in France.

But tremble, tremble, impious man! Thy crime
On all the nations' hearts stands written deep."

I was a prophet here. Germany in arms,
A nation of great hearts and thought as great,
Avenging Freedom foully done to death,
Against him let whole populations loose.
Behold him fallen on field, captive at sea:
By Liberty he rose, by her he fell.
France in my youthful fervency I loved,
I loved the awful warrior guiding her:
But, when I heard, "He's made an Emperor now,
Nor that alone, but despot autocrat,"
The hate I felt extinguished all that fire.

For many 'twas a cause of deepest grief
To contemplate with golden diadem
A brother of that despot on our throne.
His praise was—having turned the Bourbon out;
Whence, setting every other thought at rest,
They all applauded him, and so did I.
A chosen band of daring souls and brave
Encircled the incoming Frenchman round,*
And of two evils they acclaimed the less,
Awaiting a true good to come one day.
Round the new sceptre flocking now I marked
A crowd of shining minds, and joyed herein;

* Joseph Bonaparte (I need hardly observe) was not strictly a Frenchman. He was a Corsican, of Corsican or Italian parentage, born before Corsica had become a French possession. He was thus an Italian, naturalized as a Frenchman.—W.

And, taking up the lyre resolvedly,
Inly I said: "A poet I was born,
And such I will be in my future course!"*
The use of reason scarce had I attained
When France's thundercloud I heard that pealed—

* My first volume of poems, printed in Naples in 1807, was dedicated by me to Baron Giovanni Avalloni, who, upon hearing me recite some of the compositions, voluntarily offered to have the whole of them printed. That volume, which was never re-issued, must have become very scarce. [I possess an imperfect copy of it. The poems—some of them poor, and not any exactly good—deal partly with national events, and this naturally in a spirit conformable to the Napoleonic *régime*. There are some strong animadversions on the Bourbon monarchy.—W.] My dramas, written for the Theatre of San Carlo, were printed at the time; were they collected together, they would make up a volume.

King Joseph and King Joachim have been depicted by grave historians, and I will not add anything regarding their public and private character. But, for truth's sake, I may say that here in London I was very well acquainted with Joseph Bonaparte, after he had returned from America in 1831, and that I found many personal gifts in him to admire. In his house I saw a good deal not only of him but of his brother Lucian, his nephew Louis (the present President of the French Republic), Lucian's daughter Lady Dudley Stuart, with whom I became intimately acquainted, and who, at the baptismal font, gave her own name, Christina, to my younger daughter. I might say that I have known all the members of that renowned family, either in Naples or in London, except the great Napoleon, whom I never saw. Joseph was kind-natured and cultivated in mind; but in Naples, spoiled by courtiers, he was a bad king. One evening, while I was improvising in his house, his daughter, Princess Charlotte, made a pencil sketch of me, and she sent it me framed as a present: I still preserve it. [I also have preserved it, and have given it to my youngest daughter.—W.] I could here relate many dialogues which I had with Lucian, his son Pierre, etc., and with the present French President. But I will only say that Lucian was a republican, but with many prejudices, and the present President was and is of a character all puffed up with ambition. Never did I hear from his lips a single word indicating a liberal spirit.

Which next diffused around and far-afar
Terror to Kings, to nations hopefulness.
At dawning of my lifetime I resolved
To follow in that movement—and alas!
From the successive shiftings of the chance,
I, loving good, saw evil that ensued.
Across the Red Sea, sea of blood and war,
Must then the Promised Land be still approached?
That fatal whirlwind, with alternate shock,
In Naples' kingdom all-deplorable
Full ten times made a change of government,
Alternating with serfdom liberty:
And, with the flight of that demented court,
I saw it for the fourth time altering:
And the ninth change and tenth, which now I see,
Are the most miserable of them all.

Many gave homage to the new-built throne;
And I, while scorning any cringing phrase,
Struck on my lyre, and spread abroad its sound,
Saluting that forthcoming period:
And what I said thereof in varying style,
If not free-toned, is not subservient.
Soon do the accents of my lyre recall
Men's eyes and praises to the youthful gift,
And I diffuse the firstlings of my fame
About the kingdom's mighty capital;
But, by attracting blear-eyed rivals too,
Envy first made me a target for her darts.
And so much did this trouble my repose,
And raised hobgoblins such a swarm at home,

That, freed from them, my dolorous exile
Has almost seemed to me beatitude.
How often have I cried—"I am exiled now,
And pardon all the rancour of my foes."

Ah when I think it o'er I shudder still,
Though past the sixtieth limit of my years.
One Boccanera, livid in his rage,
Tempted a bravo to cut short my life;
Watchful I had to be for several months:
Can then insensate envy reach to this?
But who can tell all the contorted roads
Which rancour led my rivals to pursue?
Charges unjust, anonymous calumnies,—
But yet my innocence o'erthrew them all:
Intrepid I outfaced such keen attacks,
And became known and cherished by the young.
In public halls, where it behoved me at times
To speak the verses I had written down,
The popular applause served to prelude
My song, as soon as I appeared in sight.

That my first volume, as it issued forth,
Earned me the friendship of distinguished men,
And I was made, without soliciting,
The Poet for San Carlo's Theatre.
I wrote some dramas there, and every one
Of my attempts was followed by success:
First Julius Sabinus' mournful fate,
Then Hannibal's light loves in Capua,

And finally the Birth of Hercules,*
Were greeted with unanimous applause.
How much I joyed that on that stately stage
My mind was thus allowed to spatiate!
"In this arena of glory," I would say,
"If I have genius, I can show it forth";
And dreamed of mingling in one dulcet draught
Alfieri's style with Metastasio's.
But my illusions waned; for various thwarts,
And fetters both direct and indirect,
And the composers and the Managers,
And Prime Donne, plots, and etiquettes,
And then protectors and aught stranger still,
Frequently shuffled all my hand of cards.
Incensed I cried: "I'll leave the Theatre,
For here I'm nothing but a slave of slaves."

To Monsignor Capecelatro I sped,
Our Minister at the time for Home-affairs,
And meekly spoke, expounding first the facts,
"The Madhouse is not where I want to go."
Could vanity from sovereign patronage
Dazzle a free Parnassian intellect?
I was content with a subordinate post †
Then vacant in the King's Museum; here
Propitious did the Muses nurture me

* I possess the printed *Giulio Sabino*, 1809; not the other two libretti.—W.

† One may suppose it to have been at first a *very* subordinate post; for the pay, I find, was only 15 ducats a month, which appears to be £31, 2s. 6d. a year. Later on it was 28 ducats a month.—W.

With vivid genius of the antique arts.
Here I could pasture in the selfsame hour
My craving mind, and shelter it from vice,
For an immense choice library is joined
To the Museum, in one building's span:
And thus a double discipline exalts
My soul in beauty's pathways and in truth's.
'Mid living bronze and marble animate,
Which constantly held converse with my thoughts,
I something wrote in prose and much in verse,
Evolving grace upon the fair and true.

Staying amid those admirable hoards,
A treasure-house of arts and industries,
I met with Kings and met with Emperors,
Conspicuous artists, men of lettered fame.*

* Of the very many incidents which occurred to me in the Royal Museum, and which might furnish matter for anecdote, I will state in prose the following. In the year 1816 [it must have been in 1819, that being the year in which Charles IV. died.—W.] there came to Naples Charles IV., ex-King of Spain, elder brother of Ferdinand, King of Naples. The latter had also been numbered as fourth; then in Sicily he became third, and finally, on his return, he was declared first; and in his island-kingdom this epigram, almost prophetic, had been neatly made upon him:—

"Fourth thou wast and now art Third:—
By subtraction's rule I'm taught—
Second—First—may yet be heard,
Till at last remains a nought."

When King Charles came to visit the Museum—announced by a formal dispatch, the beating of drums, and a call to arms by the piquette stationed at the gate—we presented ourselves to receive him, with Cavalier Arditi, Director-General of the institution, at our head. The first section which

And thus three lustres of my term of life
Wore in that unperturbed abode along;
And I beheld two Kings arrive and go,
Made and unmade by force of destiny.
But, though my work was converse with the dead,
I scanned both courts, their virtues and their vice.
Of the two kings, one bad, and one was good,
And in this sentence all is summarized;
And both their fates depended, and their thrones,

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is ordinarily inspected there is the collection of statues in marble and bronze, both Latin and Greek—a most important department on the ground floor, entrusted to my custody. Thus it became my work to show first those admired treasures to the Spanish monarch, who spoke Italian very fairly. In the discharge of my office I pointed out to him the leading objects; and I recollect that in the first portico I stopped before the statue of Trajan, and I referred to his rare excellences, saying that he had been the honour of the Roman Empire and of the Spanish nation. "What, was Trajan a Spaniard?" he exclaimed with surprise. "Certainly, your majesty, if Suetonius and other historians did not deceive us." [*N.B.*—"Suetonius" appears to have been a random shot; he has left us nothing about Trajan.—W.] He visited the three porticoes and the five galleries, and showed much pleasure in my explanations. Having gone through the whole, I said that others would have the honour of showing him the picture-gallery, the Etruscan vases, the bronze implements, the collection of papyri, and the immense library, which were kept in the upper apartments. He said in a determined tone, "Come yourself." I felt much embarrassed in obeying, because I knew how jealous were Don Giuseppe Campi, Canon Jorio, and others, if any one encroached on their departments, and especially on so solemn an occasion; but I made a bow and obeyed. He remained on that long visit upwards of four hours, and, highly satisfied, he left. The following day, towards the same hour, a fresh beating of drums and a fresh call to arms announced a visitor of importance. It was again the King of Spain. On his arrival I alone received him, as neither Cavalier Arditi nor any one else had been apprised by a dispatch, as on the preceding day, of this unexpected visit. Entering my small apartment, he asked for a seat, which I at once gave him. He sat down, and affably

Upon the man who dreamed omnipotence;
But by the Spanish and the Northern storm
The star of Bonaparte turned to pale.
Odious to many, Joseph went his way,—
That silence followed him which speaks for much;
Wasteful and lustful and vainglorious,
He by his courtiers only was deplored.
Better than Ferdinand he was for sure,
But that was merit (merit!) none could miss.

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added, "Sit down also," and, seeing that I hesitated, "Sit down, sit down," he repeated. He said that he had returned to re-inspect some of the objects which had most struck him the previous day, and chiefly the Emperor Trajan—adding: "Now that I know he was a Spaniard, tell me all you know about him." And I failed not to inform him that that Emperor, elected by the unanimous vote of the Roman Army, was surnamed Optimus; and that after his death, at the election of every new Cæsar, the senate installed him in the Empire with the salutation, "Sis bonus ut Trajanus, sis felix ut Augustus." That on his accession to the throne he entered Rome on foot, to denote his disregard of worldly pomp; that, confident in the love of the entire nation, he abolished the offence of high treason; that he embraced any persons who came to visit him, and had his residence inscribed "Public Palace," in order that all might enter without the least scruple, as though the house were their own. In short, I narrated what history sets down about him. On the third day the King renewed his visit. He remained alone with me, as on the preceding day, and, assuming a more confidential tone, he enquired whether I was married. I replied, No. He then told me that a Congress of Sovereigns was about to assemble in Verona, at which he meant to claim his throne which had been usurped by his son, with whom he showed himself very much displeased. "If I return to Spain, of which I am almost certain," he added, "you shall come with me, and I will make you Director of the Escurial." "But, your sacred Majesty, so many distinguished Spaniards—" "The one who is there now is my enemy, and I mean to dismiss him."—"But I am in employ here, and your august brother—"—"Oh, I spoke to him about that last evening, and he will willingly concede you to my wishes." I bowed, and thanked him for so much goodwill. But a few

Later when Joachim of a sudden fled,
I heard a general chorus of concern—
"If but his mind were equal to his heart,
Who worthier than he to fill a throne?"
Ferdinand matched with him produces that
Which in a picture gives the shades and lights.
O epoch memorable for wretchedness!
Oh the caprice of barbarous destiny
Which sent us back that faithless Ferdinand,
Bereaving us of kindly Joachim!
And soon the craven to the valiant gave,
By the same destiny, a barbarous death.

O Bonaparte, *thou* the object deemed
Of worship? Ah he lies who calls thee great! *

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days passed, and Charles IV. lay a frigid corpse in his brother's palace. He was a simple, kindly man, given to talking, and he held with others the same sort of conversation that he had held with me. His right was manifest, and his son schemed to get rid of him by means of his Minister Labrador. This was the rumour which then ran through Naples. I could relate many other anecdotes of what happened to me in the Museum, but I leave them alone. I will only mention that I elucidated those admired monuments in two volumes entitled *Catalogue Raisonné of the Royal Museum.* In order to give some credit to a young man whom I liked much—Giovanni Finati, son of the Controller—I allowed him to have his name on the title-page, with the condition that the two volumes should be printed at his expense, while the receipts from the sale should be halved between us. After my departure he took advantage of my misfortune, and wholly defrauded me of that labour of mine. The profits became and are entirely his; whereas he had no share in the work, except only the measuring of the statues and busts—nothing else. [I possess the book in question.—W.]

* This vigorous tirade against the mighty Napoleon, written in Rossetti's old age, is no doubt a true expression of his reasoned opinion, but only of

For thee the world claims lofty intellect,
For thee, with an enormous error fooled.
Thou wast, in wresting from the nations hope,
At once liberticide and suicide.
That day when thou didst will thee Emperor,
Thou in St Helena dugg'st out thy grave:
That day thou gav'st back Austria all her strength,
To Russia daring, potency to Kings.
That edict which the applauding Senate brought
To thee, 'twas that the edict of thy death.
Well do I know how scheming sycophants
Proclaimed the day auspicious and of joy;
But that day sowed the mournfulness of years
For thee and thine, for nations, for the world.
And thou, of piercing sight, thou saw'st it not?
By God, a mole would not have failed to see!
For thee I weep not, who in long-drawn throes
Didst reach convulsive to thy latest hour;
But for the innocent nations weep I fain,
Who, by thy hand betrayed, are moaning still.
Ever have I been prone to pardoning thee
Thy proper anguish, but not that of man.
But for that crime by which thou didst indue
Thee with vast shame and us with sorrows vast,
How long ago would Europe have beheld,
One after other, low her tyrants sunk!
When I the effect contemplate of thy crime,
I am tempted to exclaim—Be thou accurst!

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one side of that. It should not be supposed that he was really blind to the enormous and many-sided genius of the man; if he condemned, he also most sincerely admired. See the sonnet at p. 191.—W.

Receive the judgment of the centuries—
I seem to hear it sounding o'er thy grave—
"Thou couldst have been the tyrants' death-dealer,
And chosest for thyself a despot's name.
As the keen-cutting vengeful sword of God,
Let wrong thou didst to others fall on thee!"

Now the Queen-city, Joachim being gone,
Remained uncertain of her future fate;
And, like death's messenger, the cry arose—
"Ferdinand hastens back, and Caroline":
And on a thousand gloomy brows one read
More horror than for earthquake or the plague.
And of those two the most terrific things
I heard a hundred hundred tongues narrate.
Some travelled, some escaped, some hid themselves,
And one was known to have gone mad with fear:
But hope, I saw, had halfway been revived
When it was published—"Caroline is dead."
Yes, more than halfway; for they all averred:
"This Bourbon, in himself, is weak and null;
And, if he did become so black a wretch,
'Twas that she-Fury who impelled him on:
Now that she's foundered in the realms of night,
A human being he may be once more."
And so it proved. The first-imagined fears
Were cleared away from the most troubled minds,
And all perceived that on a better plan
That richly-gifted Kingdom would be ruled,
And would attain, under a milder curb,
If not prosperity, at least repose.

The Aonian chorus revelled in the peace,
And chaunted amid others' songs my own.
Our Ferdinand the Fourth was just a fiend,
But, dubbed the First, he wears an angel's grace.
And I beheld that festive ardour grow,
The less expected, all the livelier.
'Tis true so much rejoicing was perturbed,
In almost every confine of the realm,
By feverish epidemic, Noja's plague,
And, worst of all, a longsome year of dearth:
But still the King dictated remedies,
And, if he could no more, he sympathized.

Then, when he sickened, weighted now with years,
And the severe disease seemed past a cure,
So great the sorrow everywhere appeared
That all the civil orders shared in it;
And, when fair daylight followed on the cloud,
The joy was equal to the genuine grief.
In style now classic or romantic now
Native Academies acclaim the event;
And I, in verse extemporized almost
(And Fame still guerdons it with some applause),
Saluted, in the name of Italy,
The Bourbon Sovereign restored to health.*

* This poem by Rossetti forms one in a series bearing the following title: *Per la Ricuperata Salute di S. M. Ferdinando I., Attestato di Gioia della Società Sebezia. Napoli*, 1819. Agostino Gallo (named immediately afterwards) contributed a Sapphic ode. Of course the name Gallo means "Cock": Corvo ("Raven," or bird of ill-omen) is jocularly proposed as a substitute.—W.

One Gallo (maybe Corvo?), of Sicily,
Who thought himself a swan of Hippocrene—
Or Gallo or Corvo, acrid and malign—
Trying to do me an ill turn, did a good.
And this affair I'm minded to narrate,—
A curious little story as it is.
He spread on all sides a censorious croak
That my address was outrage 'gainst the King:
And yet that ode contains such flatteries
That, when I now reflect on it, I blush;
And *he* discerned therein, and clamoured loud,
An actual insult in the seeming praise.*
Against my verses such a cackle-cry
Was raised by him on one and other hand
That in the end our arbitrary Police
Prohibited their printing in the book;
And many said that I should find myself
Dismissed my employ, or sent to jail perchance.
The selfsame calumnies against my song,
From quarters more than one, arrived in court.
The King called for a copy, and, reading it,
He was affected, and was moved to tears.
The Duke of Ascoli was on the spot,
Who with minuteness told me of the facts.
Indeed the King so highly prized my lines

* I have read this ode for the express purpose of discovering what Signor Gallo objected to, and can only see this. There are certain stanzas in which the overpraise (too truly termed "flatteries" by the author) takes the form of remonstrance. The King is told that the nation, in loving him, do in fact love *themselves*; that the public happiness demands that he should be duly careful of his invaluable life; and that, at his age, he must not persist in incessant hunting.—W.

That he directed the Home-Minister
To have me summoned, and to give me thanks
In a dispatch sent by the government:
And, paper in hand, he added—"Tell him too,
I wept at it, and feel indebted to him."
Further to crush that shameless calumny
Which he remarked some people still believed,
He made the Minister Tommasi read
The poem aloud, in Council at the full,—
And oh what plaudits did my lines secure!
And at some parts the King shed tears anew.
I, then at the Museum, saw arrive
A Halberdier with grave and serious mien.
Ah what uncertainties assailed my heart!
Here comes the announcement that will strip me bare!
I read, in doubt and wavering, the dispatch:
"His Majesty requires you—come at once."
Anxious I sped, and pondered on the way
What answer I could offer to the charge.
I entered with that sinister forecast,
And General Naselli, a Minister,
Came forward and encountered me, all smiles.
He said "Be seated"—pointing with his hand
To a gilded sofa, face to face with him.
He, turning with an affable regard
Toward me, my eyebrows arching with surprise,
Repeats, with manifest complacency,
The kindly words used by the Sovereign:
And on my countenance he could observe,
Mingled with pleasure, some astonishment.
I answered—after a simple preluding

With which I need not here concern myself—
"This moment compensates for studious years,—
I'm thankful for the kindness of our King.
But, Sir, is any power above his own?
What he so much approves others reject."
He answered me with an offended air—
"Have you your senses? This I can't excuse."
And I: "The whole collection is in print,
And my one poem only turned adrift;
My senses serve me well, your Excellency:
The Censorship has over-ruled the King."
He smiled, and then, in a laconic tone,
Dictated to his secretary thus:
"The poems all must pass the censorship,
Except the one by Gabriel Rossetti.
From his the printing cannot be with-held,
Because the King has passed it and approved."
I showed about all this no great conceit,
But it was greeted warmly by the young,
And that Sicilian Gallo, envious man,
Remained a laughing-stock, and drooped his comb.*
Then, when my lyric came to public light,
It won in Naples universal praise.
The fame of it went forth to Rome itself,
Where I am proud of being amply known,
For there I left a band of well-wishers
When the Provisional Government dissolved
In which I unobtrusively had held

* What I relate of Agostino Gallo, of Palermo, is strictly accurate; I confirm in prose what I have stated in verse.

In the Fine Arts a post of eminence.*
And the Sebezia Academy with pride
Noted my victory, which involved its own,
And which was viewed with so much bitterness
By Gallo that he fled that very night.
This Gallo against me, an exile now,
Perhaps is crowing still—which I forgive.

In that Parthenopean Company
I sang the Threnody for several dead,
And for the saintly Bruno d'Amantea,
The noble surgeon and philanthropist; †
And good Valletta, on coming back from Rome,
And fair Paloma, did I celebrate.‡
And in the presence of the royal court,
Which had erected a majestic tomb,
I sang the glory and deplored the death
Of the renowned Giovanni Paisiello, §
Who, the harmonic Siren's progeny,
Bore sway o'er Europe's music on the stage.
Torquato Tasso's golden trumpet next
Blew with my breath, to magnify himself, ¶

* This relates to events in the time of King Joachim.—W.

† This poem is printed in the *Versi* of Rossetti (Lausanne, 1847). It begins, "Tu posi, o giusto, ed io ti seggo al fianco."—W.

‡ Valletta was a lawyer and a poet. "Fair Paloma" was the Marchesina Luisa Gomez-Paloma, an associate of the Sebezian Society. The verses (which begin "Parmi vederti ancor quando animata") indicate that she was accomplished both as a vocalist and as a painter.—W.

§ This is also in the *Versi*. Begins—"Dunque muto per sempre ahi muto resta."—W.

¶ Similar remark. Begins—"Sei tu che in questa riva a te natia."—W.

He mine inspirer from the living stone
Which near the sea the King had raised for him ;
And on that evening the Sebezia
Brought from all Europe choicest guests to meet.
There the good King of Denmark's worthy heir
Came to embrace me 'mid a crushing throng ;*

* All that I relate here and in the following Canto is strict matter of fact. The Prince Royal of Denmark, who was afterwards King [Christian VIII., who came to the throne in 1839—W.], and is now dead, was enrolled in the Società Sebezia as an honorary member ; and on that evening when the bust of Torquato Tasso was inaugurated—a fine work by Signor Solari of Naples,—he was seated, along with all the other Academicians, beside General Naselli, the honorary President. He was so impressed by my composition (which formed the close of the stately proceedings) that he said, embracing me, "May I ask a favour of you? I should like to have a copy of your poem to present to the Princess, who, owing to indisposition, was not able to come this evening."—"I shall attend to it immediately, and to-morrow you shall receive it." That royal couple was held in the highest esteem by all. The Prince, a man of masculine and imposing presence, had fought with signal courage against the French, especially in the forests of Norway. The Princess, a lady of extreme grace and beauty, was universally admired and praised. Next morning I rose early and copied out the poem ; and hardly had I completed the work (rather a long one, 54 octaves) when I received a note from Baron Jubar, the Prince's majordomo, to remind me of my promise, and invite me to dine with the royal couple the following day. At table were all the foreign ambassadors, and other diplomatists. This occurred, so far as I recollect, towards the beginning of 1820. The Prince invited me various times ; and about the end of that year—when the revolution and the King's departure had already occurred—one evening after dinner he called me aside, and said : "As it is our intention to pass the rest of the winter in several cities of North Italy, would not you come with us, to instruct the Princess in your beautiful language?"—"But, your Highness, I am here employed."—"I have already spoken to the Minister of the Interior, who will grant you leave for six months." A fierce lightning-flash seemed to strike my mind, and I comprehended that the King was betraying us.

And with my daring images I struck
French, Russians, Germans, Spaniards, Englishmen.

And now in Sapphic now in Theban mood,
I sang beside the urn, with laurel wreathed,
Wherein Luigi Quattromani sleeps,*
A casket from the Bible's treasure-stores:
In him I greeted, and I bless him now,
The kindly master in the social friend.
Truly a poet—I seem to see him still—
Inspired himself, inspiring others too:
When blind and old, he in his mind preserved
Acutest sight and lively youthfulness.

I interrupt the verse-narrative for a moment, to point out that Rossetti here recounts—what was of leading importance in his Neapolitan career—how he came to be an improvising poet. Luigi Quattromani was a renowned improvisatore, and (so far as I infer) little or

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The Prince, cautioned through some diplomatic channel to quit Naples (as in fact he did), wished to withdraw me from that political danger in which he perceived me to be greatly entangled. With these sinister thoughts, I replied thanking him for an offer which highly honoured me, and saying that I would soon apprise him of my decision. On the following day I wrote to him that, in the peril to which my country would soon be exposed, I should be stained with cowardice if I left it; and that I therefore felt compelled to decline accompanying him in the proposed tour, an honour which in any other conditions I would gladly have welcomed. Nor do I repent of what I then did.

* The Sapphic ode is likewise in the *Versi*. It begins—"Furon tristi, O Luigi, i giorni tuoi."—W.

not at all an author of verse written and published. The date when Rossetti first knew him, and soon afterwards began improvising, is not here defined; I suppose it may have been towards 1810. When my father came to London in 1824 he resolved not to prolong the practice; thinking, and no doubt rightly, that, although he might excite some surprise and attention by improvising, it would on the whole lower his position as a serious professional man in the teaching and literary vocation. Yet he did occasionally give a specimen of his prowess as an extempore poet; the latest notice I find of such a performance was in his family-circle, in 1840. If I myself ever heard him improvise, I have forgotten it. The observations which he here makes on the dangers of the habit, both to health and to purity of poetic style, are worth noting. He first proceeds with a description of Quattromani's doings.

> Whenso I heard him touch on David's harp,
> All fervid with extemporaneous power,
> Upon his face shone out the impassioned soul
> Which spread around spontaneous bursts of light.
> And that same flame I saw a-shine in him
> On mine own spirit did I feel descend.
> Yes, what I heard meseemed not possible;
> 'Twas ecstasy to me, enchantment, dream.

But what appeared incredible almost
Was coming to be realized in myself.
On my way home I tried to do the like,
And oh astonishment! I also sang
Line after line: so strange the upshot seemed
That I renewed the essay for several days.
By daytime and by night assiduously
Did I repeat that same experiment.
Often with Quattromani I conferred,
Who gave my verses not a little praise;
And once the blind old man exclaimed to me—
"Alternate with me in an improvise."
And, after a few trials and demands,
He took me up with so much ardent zest
That 'mid the pomp of images produced
He gave me many a "viva" from his heart.
He closed by saying: "For poetic strifes
Nature has given you athletic power."
"Persist," he often said to me, "persist,
And let no sloth impede you on your road.
A poet you were born, and those who seek
To change your course—believe this—envy you.
What you at your commencement do with me
Might seem the fruit of lengthy studying."
And often did our verses alternate
In choice assemblies with co-equal praise,
So much men's judgments wavered in the scales
That 'twixt us victory remained in doubt.
But this impressed on me the stamp of worth—
What honour to contend with such a man!

He, like a living mirror, faces me,
And, seeing myself in him, I can but grieve.
He old and blind, and I too blind and old:
And he died poor, and I am dying poor.
But which of us the more deplorable?
He in his country, I exiled by fate!

Oft on this foreign shore I've asked myself,
Did my addiction to extempore song
Harm me, or profit? I remain in doubt.
But this, without nice solving, I'll affirm—
I was becoming palsied and in spasms.
A Galen's rigour ought to cry it down,
And thus prevent so miserable an end.
'Twas so my Brother Dominick expired,*
Who in such efforts was expert and apt.
I never heard that brother of mine recite—
He left me a child, but I remember him;
And well I know that he at Parma's bar
Was greeted as a re-born Cicero.
Youthful he died, far from his family—
And wherefore died? Because he improvised.
More than one symptom has convinced me clear
That, through my leaving off that exercise,
Exile, in that alone, has been my friend:
And so, from much reflection I can say,
That mental strain leads to paralysis.
Nor only with regard to healthful life

* He died in Parma in July 1816, aged forty-three. The paralysis which killed him had been going on for about a twelvemonth. My father had himself more than one stroke of paralysis in his closing years.—W.

Makes it the nerves uncertain and unstrung,
But as to writing with correctness too
I fear at last it worsens toward neglect.
Yes, that it harms the style I can but think:
To work a-sudden is not working well.
Thou who wouldst merit the Phœbean wreath,
O youth, take caution 'gainst this same abuse;
For these my verses, written slipshod-like,
Perhaps derive from that ill-wont of mine;
For now I hurry verse to follow verse,
And reel them off as 'twere a kind of talk.
Good composition craves a needful space,
Not emulous capricious fantasy.

Though such a practice I cannot defend,
Still I become renowned because of that.
Full many a noted passage from my muse
Was quoted, serious and facetious both;
And oft-times at the tables of the great,
Invited guest and poet, I had my place.
What precious days I wasted on good cheer,
Whence, save keen penitence, I've nothing now!
Amid our Princes, Dukes, and Marquises,—
Cassero, Campochiaro, Berio—
Phœbus joined Bacchus with a joyous note,
Doubly to drench the mind's ebriety.
Inflamed and reckless 'mid the toasts and praise,
I saw my youthful Muse more daring grown;
And, when I went from Naples to the Tiber,
I found my fame there copiously diffused.

Among the poets whom I cherished there,
I give but Biondi's and Ferretti's names.*

As one of the Provisional Government
King Joachim had summoned me to Rome:†
Monte Citorio there, seven months and more,
Saw me employed at morning and at eve;
And I was present at the Pope's return
In year thirteen of this our century.
And *there* was likewise put in exercise
My Muse, by urgencies a thousandfold;
And I again aroused enthusiasm,
For poetry in Rome is greatly loved.—
Of this no more, for I can hear a voice—
"To enlarge hereon were obvious self-conceit."

Nor does Rome stint herself to mere applause,
But gives me titles and diplomas too.
The Arcadia, and Tiberine Academy,
The Ardenti of Viterbo, and others more,
Inscribed my own 'mid many goodly names.
In Naples not of the Sebezia alone

* Of Biondi I cannot say anything distinct: Ferretti continued corresponding with Rossetti, in very affectionate terms, after the latter had settled in London.—W.

† I may mention that, besides performing this service under the Government of King Joachim, Rossetti was enrolled in his National Guard (or Guard of Internal Security) in Naples. I have a document, 15th December 1814, which shows this. His berth in Rome has been termed by him elsewhere "a provisional post in the Secretariate of the Provisional Government, being the post which concerns Public Instruction and the Fine Arts."—W.

But the Pontanian Society,
And even the Orezia from Palermo,
I hold diplomas in this distant land;
And, now that I am at my day's extreme,
One also I receive from Lyons in France.
I *was*, not am. The past is all a school
Where clear I see the nothingness of man.
For me has vanished all: only the grave
Awaits me, and thither willingly I go.
Life is a lengthened dream, and, when it ends,
All lettered glory is a dream as well;
And vanity of vanities I mark,
Yea even in that which crowns the highest of men.
Had I the golden trump and deathless name
Of Homer, or of Virgil or Torquato,
What would the guerdon of my verses be?
Just a dissyllable I should not hear.
Sad fate!

But I return to Ferdinand,
Auspicious planet to his realm restored.
He, by endowing the Sebezia,
Seemed patron of our country's intellect;
So that I frequently heard men proclaim—
"Demon he went, and angel he returned."
But who can ever change the human soul?
He in reverting saw us evermore
As liegemen to himself or to Murat:
The first he greeted with a cheerful mien,
And for the second nursed a secret grudge.
Brothers with brothers he did not unite,

As should have been effected from the first.
All the best posts were given away to these,
Though oftentimes unjust and ignorant;
Those others were neglected and depressed,
However honourable and well-informed.
A victim I of such partiality,
Of which the proofs could day by day be seen;
What was my due he gave to some one else.
When Naples to their palace had beheld
From Sicily return the unrighteous court,
In her most famous University
The chair of Eloquence was left unfilled;
And in the ardour of a youthful hope
I too competed 'mid a lettered band.*
We numbered thirty-six. Before me I saw
Conspicuous talents, each more strong than I;
And we were set to pass a triple test,
Three different subjects taken out by lot:
Two, writ in the Professors' presence there,
Who had to be the censors of the themes.
The first was in the language of that Rome
Who gave her laws and usage to the world;
The second, in the tongue of Italy,
Classic in style, and resonant and terse;
Lastly, the third one had to be pronounced
To the assembled public from the chair.
For the two writings, Gatti, Oliva, and I,
Issued with equal credit from the strife:
But in the third and arduous exercise
I gained the victory over all the rest.

* This occurred in 1817.—W.

Amid the surging and applauding throng,
The Faculty cried many times "Well done!"—
Who got the chair? A certain Bianchi did,
Who had salient merits as a loyalist.
And mice were cutting capers on the forms
Deserted by our youth indignantly.
I vamp up no fantastic notions here:
All Naples can declare it to be true.

The young men, nettled by a noble scorn,
Called *me* Professor—not the other man;
And I at home opened a private class,
Where I was trainer of some vivid minds:
And, if I thither could return one day,
How many a pupil should I see around!
Ah fervid youth, liege to the beautiful,
Who so did sorrow for mine adverse fate,
Durso, Malpica, Curci, Caccavon,*
And others to whose names my bosom beats,
In you I glory; and you, choice grateful souls,
Glory that I your master was erewhile.
The army, by the royal ordinance,
Saw heroes now supplanted by poltroons;
From the tribunals upright judges banned,
And greedy vultures were installed on them;
And, what is worse, the Kingdom's treasury
By vultures in like manner was devoured.

* Dr Curci, who had a passionate attachment to my father, came to London to see him towards 1836; Durso also I can remember as having visited him towards 1840. "Cesare Malpica" is a name I often heard him pronounce; of Caccavon I am not able to say anything.—W.

Likewise a matter so terrific happed
As to fill all the Kingdom with dismay.
Wicked Canosa, back from Sicily,*
Invested as the Minister of Police,
Conceived a project truculent and vile,
Enough for Satan's self to shudder at.
This monster stands by various writers drawn,
And I can be excused from limning him:
Yet, always by the King's approval graced,
The man's foul shame reflected on the King.
In every crime he out-did every wretch,
And now he laboured to out-do himself.
He, pondering an atrocious butchery
Which for whole weeks he set to ruminate,
Filled with the loathliest scum the capital,
Offscouring of the gibbets and the hulks;
And at a signal these men were to pounce
On any whom they saw unlike their crew.
That felon was a new Friar Alberic. †
Oh the hard fate and outrage of our time!
The Austrian General fathomed this intrigue,
And forced the King to turn the monster out;
Inept Italian princes were and are
The Austrian Sultan's underling Bashaws.
Escaped from this portentous massacre,

* The statements here made about the Principe di Canosa are not inventions; they will be found confirmed in Colletta's *Storia del Regno di Napoli*, Book viii. Canosa's scheme amounted (in general terms) to an attempt to get up in 1816 a massacre of the Carbonari and their sympathizers, by a hostile sect named the Calderari.—W.

† Consigned to eternal infamy by Dante.—W.

We all denounced it with stentorian lungs.
And what a sort of crime must that have been
Which very Austria spurned!—and truth it is.
'Twas even said the King——But this I scout.

While from the foulness of despotic power
Such nauseous effluvia were diffused,
A patriotic flame wound everywhere,
And a Vesuvius all the Kingdom seemed;
And from the augmented crackling underground
At last erupted many external peals.
Like gushing blood from several arteries
Toward the treasury all the money flowed;
And with our straits our hardihood increased,
So that the government was undermined;
Already many free-souled squadrons thrilled,
Like winds unloosed to agitate the main.
The Carbonari, an unvanquished sect,*
A vast re-union of audacious souls,
Spread with a progress irresistible,
As in a wood by winds a tameless fire:
Opening I saw a gulf without confine,
And on the shelving marge the governors slept.
The politicians' atrabilious brains
Called that great movement faction—shame be theirs!

* Rossetti was a Carbonaro; but (I understand) he was not enrolled in that secret society until the second half of the year 1820, when, as the constitution had been already granted by the King, there was nothing illegal in his being a member. The word Carbonaro means literally "coalman, charcoal-burner": hence certain technical terms of the sect, occurring further on.—W.

For, being Carbonari almost all,
The movement may be termed the Kingdom's own.

The King, who did us wrong with insolence,
Might have avoided it, had he been wise.
Insensate! His commands are ridiculed
Amid the increasing cries which stun the realm.
Besides, the Vardarelli slain by fraud,*
Slain Capobianco, † all men recollect.
And what the outcome of the treacheries?
"Freedom" was sounded, "Freedom" everywhere.
Not that which, ever hungering for blood,
Like to a Fury rioted in France;
But sacred Freedom, of angelic form,
Who tells the king "Be just," and harms him not;
Who at the shrine of the metropolis
Soon saw the nation prostrated around.

* Gaetano Vardarelli, with his two brothers, commanded a formidable band of brigands (who may or may not have been Carbonari): the whole band was generally called the Vardarelli. In July 1817 the Government entered into a dishonouring compromise with these brigands; but soon afterwards, at Ururi, slaughtered the three Vardarelli and others by treachery, and, later on, others of the disbanded band at Foggia, and the remainder underwent military execution. A grimly Italian incident accompanied the massacre of the brothers Vardarelli. One of the brothers had outraged the sister of a man from Porto-Cannone. This man dipped his hands repeatedly in the blood gushing from the corpse, washed his face in it, and cried to the multitude, "L'ho purgata" (I've washed it clean). —W.

† For Capobianco's judicial murder King Joachim (not Ferdinand) was responsible; it took place in 1813. Capobianco was a Carbonaro, young, and of very daring spirit. He was invited by General Jannelli to a public dinner in Cosenza, well feasted, seized at the moment of departure, and next day condemned to be beheaded.—W.

O Freedom, girdled by the Italian light,
Never did man kneel unto thee so fair:
In vain Vandalic outrage hurled thee down,
For still in thousand hearts thou bear'st the sway.
I for six lustres vow to thee my life,
And, thine apostle, thee announce and preach.
Thou shalt return, return—no frenzy this!

Our century has seen no brighter year,
That year beheld not a more radiant day,
Than that when the symbolic furnaces
Diffused around the burning and the flash:
Those vivid flashes and those fiery heats
Spread light on minds and flame upon the heart.
And now a lofty hope bestows on all
Blest harmony which universal seems,
Because that flame and light can permeate
Through every member of the social frame.
And one could hear a new alliance preached
Of two great forces in a single sway:
Popular liberty and kingly power
Conjoined in amity by a lasting link;
Each one in this serves to ennoble each,—
Itself the nation honours in the king.*

* What I state here is matter of general knowledge; and, relating as it does to public events of that agitated period, it belongs more to history than to biography. Those authors should therefore be consulted who have treated of it; among whom I recommend the valuable Memoirs of General Guglielmo Pepe, who was greatly concerned in the occurrences, in preference to the elegant History of General Pietro Colletta, who, whether through mis-information or through distorting envy, is not always a veracious narrator. I have been intimately acquainted with both these

Of such mixed government, which Europe seems
To tend to by an impulse from on high,
England possesses much that's genuine,
But France has only seen its counterfeit.*

At that time, to the sound of thousand cheers,
Spain made it simpler, giving it the throne.
With friendly breeze from that re-fashioned scheme
Nations felt joy and princes troublousness;
And Naples, from of old the liege of Spain,
Revelled in rapture inexpressible:
In launching flames on this side and on that
More than volcano seemed the fiery forge.
That selfsame ardour all through Italy
Hurled curses on the shameful Austrian yoke,
When the year twenty, past its midway course,
Felt all the parching of the Syrian Dog:
That heat still swelled the Carbonaro heat,—
The Ausonian Genius blew his trumpet-call.

And to those memorable clangours soon
More than one note replied with sound of joy.
Silvati and Morelli, noble souls,†
Hoisted aloft the Italian battle-flag;

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writers; but more than either I prize sacred Truth; and the little which I state in this note is consequent upon most candid examination.

* This remark relates mainly, though not exclusively, to the condition of France, 1830 to 1848, under King Louis Philippe—a potentate whom Rossetti most heartily abhorred.—W.

† These were two sub-lieutenants of cavalry; after the abolition of the constitution they were both hanged.—W.

And Minichini,* of the Nolan church,
Joining them, sanctified the enterprise.
From Nola's city on to Monteforte
The band of heroes goes determinate:
Their Country guides them, and Humanity,
And twixt these Freedom who salutes the two.
With vast applause the kingdom echoes round:
Only the palace in dismay is dumb.
Terror and rage distract it hour by hour:
Yet troops are sent—but only raise a laugh;
For squadron after squadron joins with those
So as to number a resistless host:
Despotic sway now comes to such a pass
As to appear a corpse mouldering in worms.

O Monteforte, oh the glorious slope
O'er which shone forth the star of liberty!
Like Sinai and Horeb thou'lt be famed,
For on thee the new age was brought to birth.†

That hour supreme is present to my soul,
Whereby I live again in youthful prime.
Naples is wavering between hope and fear,
But outside of her walls 'tis only hope.

* I saw Minichini once or twice in my father's house—probably towards 1840. His personal appearance was anything but prepossessing.—W.

† This pæan may seem misapplied, considering the rapid collapse of the Neapolitan emancipation of 1820. That movement was, however, the first awakening of the Italian national sentiment since 1815, and in 1859 (though Gabriele Rossetti did not live to see it) the great cause had triumphed. Readers may recollect that Shelley's *Ode to Naples* celebrates in exalted terms these same events of 1820.—W.

She for the towns and cities joyously
Assembles troops and arms, and sends them on.
Guglielmo Pepe—and our fear is sped—
Mounts to be captain of the daring hosts.
Hero, all hail! History shall celebrate,
Not thy good fortune, but thy just renown.
And, more than in thy land, in hard exile
Constant wast thou, strong son of Italy.
Proud am I of thy friendship with myself,—
It is the noblest honour of my life.

And I from far cry at the mountain's base
To that day's dawn as prompted by a god,
"Lovely indeed art thou with stars in hair
Which like to vivid sapphires scintillate!" *
Dawn thou of brightest day!—and that salute
Soon through the whole of Italy re-rings.

But wherefore must I moan, remembering this?
My land, I saw thee throned, thou'rt now i' the dust:
For thee, my land, these tears,—no tears for me!
And yet Hope comes dictating to my heart:
"From the new mourning shall new joy result;
That which was then achieved is but a seed,—
The goodly seed shall bear a goodly fruit."
Yes, O ye nations, courage! and expect
From sterile winter lavish summertime.

July's ninth day is blazing in the heaven,

* Rossetti refers here to his most celebrated ode, beginning "Sei pur bella cogli astri sul crine." I quote it on p. 177.—W.

And to the people's will the King accedes.
How could I ever fully represent
The immense delight which I beheld around?

The Bourbon King, throned in his gilded seat,
Object of love in such a festival,
With rage in bosom and with joy in face,
Feigns to applaud the good he so detests:
Then on the gospel swears . . . ah crime-stained King!
Thou stamp'st the kiss of Judas on the Christ!

O realm betrayed, to which I wailing speak,
Remember that Alfieri has pronounced—
"To make a blameless king, unmake him first"—
And, if a greedy foreigner, all the more.
The deed then wrought was done in righteousness,
'Twas reason's revolution: all the same,
As if it were the greatest of all crimes
'Twas punished by the Bourbon's perfidy.
No, such a sacred movement cost to none
A drop of blood, not even a drop of tears.
Ah I remember those nine hurrying months
As though they had been blessed years of fame!
August the Parliament was opened, where
Some Cato, Tully, or Hortensius, pealed.
Activity is witnessed in the fleet,—
Ancient Amalfi seems therein revived.
The manning of the army starts anew,
But with no mixture of a foreign stock;
And warlike squadrons are adjoined to it
Of civic legions and militia-bands.

The strenuous presses creak, and everywhere
The country's intellect displays its fruits.
My own blood like a burning lava coursed:
Not I, not I, then sang, but Patriot Love!
And, to encourage that heroic race
Which from ancestral ashes came to birth,
Re-echoed did I hark to those his strains
Which he was pleased to utter through my lips:
From women and from children and from all,
Here, there, and up and down, on every hand.*
With dulcet and with martial harmony
By the Musician's skill invested, these,
Sung in all houses and in every street,
Were even quoted in the Parliament;
To their Tyrtæus all the provinces,
As chorus to the coryphee, replied.

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* I wrote several patriotic odes for that great event of the revolution of Naples, and I will here name two, which are introduced into my *Veggente in Solitudine.* They begin thus—

"Sei pur bella cogli astri sul crine"—
"Fratelli, all' armi, all' armi!"

I also composed more than sixty manifestoes upon various occurrences; they circulated in print throughout the whole Carboneria, in which I was a member of the General Assembly; likewise a brochure of some length entitled *Alla Difesa, O Cittadini.* This inflamed all hearts, when the treachery of the perfidious Bourbon King came to be known. [I possess the brochure in question. It was printed towards the end of 1820, at the time when Ferdinand I. was still professing to adhere cordially to the Constitution, notwithstanding the threatening attitude assumed by Austria. Consequently the tone of the author is highly respectful towards Ferdinand, at the same time that the nation is urged to prepare energetically for a war—possible, though as yet not exactly probable—against Austria. —W.]

All, all was active: Usages and laws
Progressed in union with the newborn rights.
But many of the law-courts had to shut,
For rivalry in virtue lessened crime.

I must here make a little digression, to illustrate this matter of "Tyrtæus." It need scarcely be said that Tyrtæus, who flourished about 650 B.C., was a Greek elegiac poet, born in Attica, lame and misshapen, and totally ignorant of military matters. In the second Messenian war the Lacedæmonians were directed by the oracle to apply to the Athenians for a general; and the Athenians (such at least is the legend, which may be largely discounted without undue scepticism) sent them Tyrtæus. This looked very like a *mauvaise plaisanterie*, and was so regarded by the Lacedæmonians; yet the result justified the oracle, and the Athenians as well. The poet poured forth his strains with such splendid impulse and vigour that he animated the troops; they abandoned the idea of raising the siege of Ithome, and thoroughly defeated the Messenians. "The popularity of these elegies in the Spartan army was such that it became the custom to sing them round the camp-fires at night, the polemarch rewarding the best singer with a piece of flesh."

The term "Tyrtæus of Italy" (Tirteo d' Italia) has been constantly applied by his countrymen to Gabriele Rossetti. I am not clear when this practice began, whether before or only after 1846, when Rossetti, in his *Veggente in Solitudine*, applied the term to *himself*. At any rate, I had until recently assumed that the phrase had only a lax application, as indicating that Rossetti, by his declaimed and published patriotic lyrics, had incited, and would continue to incite, Italians to combat for liberty and independence. But of late I have come to the almost confident conclusion that he must have taken a personal part in the sole military expedition in which the Neapolitan army sought to maintain the constitution of 1820. This conclusion is founded upon a letter (in my possession) which a certain Dr Costanza — to me not otherwise known — addressed to my father on 10th November 1847. I first read the letter with attention towards 1896, and I here give a translation of it.

"GIBRALTAR.
"*10th November* 1847.

"HONOURED COMPATRIOT,

"Twenty-six years have now passed since we bade one another a last adieu in the Island of Malta, at the fatal period of '21. You must recollect Dr Costanza, then a young physician and surgeon, now

turned of fifty years of age. You had known him in the capital of the kingdom, and you afterwards met him at Montecassino, *when you were returning from the gorges of Antrodoca after the hapless result of that first passage of arms* upon which depended the fate of our country. That Costanza is now writing to you, and warmly recommends to you three fellow-countrymen of ours, recently saved by miracle from the blood-red hands of the agents of the tyrant of Naples and Sicily. . . .

"Your Compatriot, and erewhile Companion
in misfortune,
Dr Costanza."

In this letter the mention of Antrodoca (or Antrodoco) is the essential thing. The mountains of Antrodoco are near Rieti, which was the scene of an engagement, on 7th March 1821, between the Neapolitan and the Austrian troops. The actual feat of arms was not discreditable to the Italians; but—perceiving that they were the weaker party, and that the final issue was hopeless for them—they immediately afterwards disbanded, and all was over. I cannot indeed, recollect having ever heard from my father that he was along with the army on that occasion, nor does he affirm it in his versified Autobiography; yet I now see that he must have been so. I do not infer that he was in the fighting ranks; but I do infer that two passages which are to be found in his

Veggente in Solitudine have a more positive meaning than I used to attribute to them. The passages are as follows:—

1. "Fratelli, all' armi, all' armi!" etc.

"Brothers, to arms, to arms! Our country has summoned us. *I, with my stimulating songs, will also go among you.*"

2. (As already referred to) "Tirteo d' Italia," etc.

"Who will be the Tyrtæus of Italy in the camp? 'Tis I, 'tis I! *Such I have been,* such I am."

The first of these passages comes from a song composed by Rossetti towards the date of the soldiering in 1821. The second may have been written about 1845.

I have found one other paper which seems to bear upon this semi-military act of Gabriele Rossetti. An excellent friend of his, Ferdinando Ciciloni, wrote to him from Naples on 24th November 1825, saying: "Three days ago I went to San Sebastiano, which, from the seat of the Parliament, has become a College of Music. As I crossed the courtyard, I had a mental vision of Rossetti in uniform, and with two very black moustaches." As we have seen (note on p. 36), Rossetti, though not at all a man of a soldiering turn, had belonged, in 1814, to the Guard of Internal Security under King Joachim, and once again, in 1821, he donned

a uniform—a British one this time. But Ciciloni's remark does not seem very likely to refer to either of these incidents; rather to something in which the Parliament-building was concerned, and a muster immediately before the departure of the army to Rieti appears the most probable occurrence.

Freedom immaculate, O thou who hadst
Such sacred worship on Sebeto's banks,
Iniquitous plots 'gainst thee, without and in,
The Royal Princes' visible ill-faith,
Ambition nursed by some few senators,
And envious grudge of many generals,
Engirt thee with the trackless labyrinth
When in thee Heaven was overcome by Hell.

Nor have I in repentance struck my brow
Because my worship of thee wrought me scathe.
Were I in that same case a thousand times,
A thousand I'd return to do the same.
Thee from Christianity I ne'er disjoined,—
I feel my heart-strings quivering to both.
The Bourbon perjury, the Austrian force,
On thee, O sacred Liberty, made war:
And, seeing thy holy worship thus destroyed,
I bade a farewell to the soil profaned,
And so the thundering ship conducted me
Where Christ and Freedom can be both adored.

Name to the world, O sacred Gratitude,

The Scotch-born hero who on British deck
Rescued the singer of Italian hopes
Out of the Bourbon despot's slaughter-fangs.
Sir Graham Moore,* inured to combating
In a great nation's thundrous lightning-flash,
I bear with an indelible imprint
Thy cherished name written upon my heart.
Those soul-inspired and freedom-loving strains
Intoned by me upon my native soil
On the four winds already had dispread,
O'er mountains and o'er seas, a tireless flight;
And the Britannic Genius, when they reached
His shores, bade Italy's Tyrtæus hail.
Now my propitious fate had willed it so
That by a lady were my verses read—
A British Admiral's well-honoured wife,
Whether more fair or gracious who could say?
But this I know—I saw in her combined
Penelope's heart and Helen's countenance.
She, worthy partner of the British chief,
Honours in others' mental gifts her own;
And those who know her know how highly trained
She is, and she alone discerns it not.

To Naples came the lady at the time
When flames burned there of patriotic love,
And she expressed the wish she had conceived
To know the Italian poet face to face;

* Sir Graham Moore, brother of the famous General Sir John Moore, who died in the field in the campaign of Corunna. The brothers might truly be called *duo fulmina belli*.

And with such ardour she admired his work
That numerous verses she could quote by heart.
An English officer, of cultured mind,
Who had always shown me marks of courtesy,
And who in the Museum saw me at whiles,
Made me acquainted with the lady's wish.
I to the invitation gave response,
And so a day was settled for my call.

She—as a sister might a brother greet
Returning—greeted me in amity;
Yet day by day this kindliness increased.
Fair Angel of God's presence sent on earth,
Ah not so soon return to Paradise!
Many there circle his eternal throne,
But angels are not plenteous here below.
In all that effervescent period
She, whose good wishes were for our success,
Remained a witness of my innocence,
And an approver of my patriot zeal.

When by the foul effect of treacheries
Our government had perished, she was grieved,
And for unfortunate Rossetti's fate
She felt concern, and to her husband spoke:
"Save from the axe that guiltless man; if love
Of country is a crime, you are guilty too!"

Alas how hard did exile seem to me,
And leaving in such woes my native land!
Three times he offered refuge on his ship,

And all the three times I rejected it.
But my continuing was so fool-hardy
That wiser I accepted it the fourth.

Lamenting night and day my country's lot,
And as to my own life not caring much,
From March to June I kept myself concealed,
'Mid traps laid by a sleepless-eyed police.*
One night I was in that terrific plight,
When a voice called upon my name, and said:
"Fly—I discern your scaffold plain to see!"
I look, and find 'tis General Fardella,
Who was just then the Minister of War;
But, while I am rousing from my wonderment,
The dark receives him—moveless I remain.
Meseems I see him still, the while I write.

* The house in which I kept heedfully concealed for three months is in the Concordia quarter. Opposite it was a meagre invalid, who posted himself all day at the window, to peer at whatever was going on in the neighbourhood—which prevented me from getting a little fresh air. One day, from the shadowed inside of my room, I saw that a funeral-car stopped at his door. I perceived he must be dead, and I was glad of it—why conceal the fact? My prying bugbear being gone, I felt more at liberty, and I wrote for him the following epigrammatic epitaph:—

"Here lies a man of prying peering art,
Who in other folk's affairs made endless pother:
And he from this world did at last depart,
Merely to fathom what is done in t'other."

[I may add that on 18th March 1821, midway between the military disaster at Rieti on 7th March, and the dissolution of the Parliament on 21st March, Rossetti procured a Neapolitan passport for either Spain or Malta; but it seems that he never attempted to use it, but lay *perdu* instead, until shipped off to Malta by Admiral Sir Graham Moore.—W.]

He, who so often gave my lines applause,
Had entered furtive in my hiding-place:
But how he found it out I cannot say.
How could I sleep, or hope again for calm?
Within my soul I heard the word—"Fly, fly!"
In perturbations having passed the night,
I to the lady wrote at earliest dawn;
And towards the eve two English subalterns *
Most willingly responded to my wish;
And they, to make my move less perilous,
Gave me red uniform resembling theirs.
I on the moment, be it luck or thought
To pass more safely before others' eyes,
Packed a few clothes and papers many a one
In a small trunk, and was in readiness:
And I exclaimed, twixt joyful heart and grieved,
"I bear with me my all—Ready—let's go."
Between the gallant pair I took the coach,
Which drove us forth on our clandestine path †
To where a skiff was in await for us,
With six athletic oarsmen on the beach.

* It appears that one of these officers was named Stanford. My aunt, Charlotte Polidori, being in Naples in 1840, knew something of a Mr Stanford, who (as she wrote) "knew Rossetti well; it was on *his* arm that he leaned when, dressed as an English officer, he went on board. He would have been put to death, had he not left, merely on account of his political opinions—on no other subject could a word be said against him."—W.

† I remember that, when I set off in the coach between the two English officers, as we passed before the royal palace to reach Santa Lucia where the skiff awaited, a police inspector exclaimed—"By God! the man in the middle looks to me like Rossetti!" But the coach passed rapidly on, and a few moments afterwards I found myself in the skiff, and then in the ship.

O Rochfort,* thou to which the naval forts
All paid salute as they before thee passed,
And thundering thou through hundred-fourscore mouths
Didst spread afar thy nautical command,
Thee sinuous the Mediterranean,
And thee vast Ocean's sheer immensity,
Saw dominating the unstable wave,
And christened thee the Formidable Fort.
Thee from the skiff I see, and feed my glance,
As on artilleried walls, upon thy bows.

The mighty ship gave symptoms of good-will,
Expressed in divers modes by the ample crew;
And I—I kissed that wooden Albion
Amid the naval group who smiled thereat.
To the saloon bright-shining in the dusk
I sped, to give Thetis and Neptune thanks.
"Here is a pair of gods not fabulous,"
I said, when greeted by their noble smiles.
The grace which can forestall a modest wish
I always found on either countenance.

Then in the night I went with saddened soul
To contemplate the shore which met my view.
All are reposing in the silent hour,
Except some watch that paces vigilant;
And I alone and pensive on the prow

* The flagship, a first-class man-of-war. [Rossetti Italianizes the name into Roccaforte, and then proceeds to some *jeux de mots* on *Rocca* (which in Italian means fortress). I have had to take the second syllable, fort, for a like purpose.—W.]

Stand communing with this my land betrayed;
And a few happy days and many dire
Are passing in review before mine eyes.
Ever ferocious Tyranny I saw
Becoming stronger by flagitious means;
And Freedom, tasted for a few poor days,
Begetting, like the fruit of Eden, death;
And Treason, like a snake pestiferous,
From two great goblets sipping tears and blood.
And, while my fantasy on every side
Ran riot, struck by miserable ideas,
The scenes of sanguinary Ninety-nine
Offered themselves to my dejected soul;
And o'er the regal lair meseemed I saw
A host funereal of threat'ning ghosts.
"Unhappy country, adieu!"—And that adieu
Over all Italy I diffused in song.*

* The allusion is to the justly-admired lyric by Rossetti, commencing "Nella notte più serena." See p. 182.—W.

To thee the first the British prow was turned,
Flourishing Malta, small but beautiful,
A quiet refuge 'mid the unquiet sea,
Of an Italian mind and Arab speech.
I, sifting out of fallacies the truth,
Full half a lustre passed within thy bounds;
And, but for patriotic sorrowings,
Out there I should have led a placid life,—
For I encountered courteous, cultured minds,—
Culture in some, in many courtesy.

But both of these—they have my homage here—
I amply in one person found conjoined,
John Hookham Frere, a learned man and wise,
A Privy Councillor of the British Crown.
Himself he shone, not through extraneous aids,
And how I knew him I shall gladly tell.
Fame, so propitious to poetic gifts,
In Malta made a magnified report—
That Italy's Tyrtæus had arrived,
And rescued by the British Admiral.
And I by many people was informed
That in the higher class the wish prevailed
That in some noted house I should display
My fervour of poetic improvise;

And I, now so suspicious of my powers,
Unhesitating answered—"Yes, at once."

Ah me unhappy! I'm no more the man!
But such must be the course of human fate.
Too true, I, then a river, am now a rill—
A rill which comes anear to drying up.
In vain I stir my fancy, which is tired,—
I cannot even command poetic phrase.
These verses—let me say this prose in rhyme—
As I dictate them, others write them down;*
And, as they all gush out extempore,
Some of them will be good, and others bad:
Nor do I blot the bad to keep the best,
But pass them current as they chance to come.
To get the whole expressed without constraint,
And without labouring after phrase and word,
I pitched on purpose on that sextal rhyme
In which one easily words the thing one wants.

On my assent, a spacious hall prepares
For ladies, men of letters, diplomats.
There that distinguished man enraptured heard
My burst of song 'mid plaudits many and full;†
And, being unused to such demonstrances,
He deemed the thing almost a prodigy.

* No doubt this is true; the practice of dictation having been frequently adopted by my father after the sight of one eye had been lost totally, and of the other partially. However, the copy of the poem from which I am translating is all in his own handwriting; and very good handwriting it is, though done with some perceptible effort.—W.

† The chief poem thus improvised was *San Paolo in Malta*. See p. 186.—W.

I sang six themes, and my excited mind
Poured copiously divergent styles and rhythms.
Persons of eminence, the following day,
Graced me by visits of civility.
But one beneficent and reverend mien
In which I read exalted characters,
A diction which, arising from the soul,
Goes to the heart, and fixes what it says—
This 'mid the throng I noted. He being gone,
I asked his name—and it astonished me;
For all that I had heard rumoured around
About his talents settled on my thought:
An ample treasure-house of classic lore,*
Such did Fame publish him by hundred mouths:
Toward him desire resistless drew me on,
Nor did his presence lessen his repute.
Unconscious of his fame he singly seemed,—
To hear it named was what he could not brook;
Courtesy generous and without display,
Learning immense, and greater modesty;—
Ah who could paint that noble-natured man?

* What I indicate regarding the Right Honourable J. Hookham Frere is far less than the truth. The life of that admirable and exemplary man ought to be written. [This was done in publications of the years 1871 and 1899.—W.] All Malta was full of his munificences, and still resounds his praise; and, when in the sequel I quitted that island for England, I found widespread confirmation of his repute as a most erudite man, and a genuine Christian. After being English Ambassador in Spain, he settled in Malta, with his sister Susan, to watch over the health of his invalid wife in a mild climate: there he had the grief of losing them both. Oh what excellent women those were! Early in 1846 he himself, struck by apoplexy, closed his beneficent life.

One day when he accorded praise anew
To chaunts of mine which wakened his surprise,
I answered him: "In you I seem to see
The imperial eagle by a sparrow charmed.
I know my verse has earned me banishment;
But I, excelling some, bend low to you."
And later, when I saw how plenteously
He dealt his succours to the sick and poor,
I in John Hookham Frere discerned the type
Of the sublime Christian philosopher.
None but an angel could pourtray him true,—
I feel my eyes grow moist to speak of him.
He called me friend, and that has been my pride,
And in myself I reverenced the name.
Having that store of virtues in my gaze,
Sanctified in him by Christianity,—
'Tis sacred duty to confess as much—
I felt myself grow better by so great
A pattern. Nevermore he left my thoughts,
And even in death within my heart he lives.

To him, after I reached the English shores
(All distant from him though I then had passed),
I dedicated Dante's Comedy,
With Analytic Comment from my pen.
That Psaltery to him too I inscribed
Which praises freedom and ennobles man,
And he with kindliness received the wish
I showed that it be dedicate to him.
Of him with lively gratitude anew
I chaunted in my "Seer in Solitude."

Those lines while I was writing, thou, blest soul,
Wast winging forth thy way to Paradise,
There to embrace the sister and the spouse
From whom thou languishing wast parted here.

O all of you elected spirits and pure,
Look down on desolate Rossetti's grief.
He in himself holds that same constancy
Which every one of you applauded oft.
Still exiled, but now old, infirm, and blind,
How different alas from other-while!
Different? Ah no! Although oppressed by years,
He for his country always is the same.
And he, on hearing how that freedom's tree
Has there re-budded, full of sapfulness,*
Blesses his every sweat of brow poured out
To irrigate its high ancestral germ;
And, now when all men sweat to nurture it
He hopes before he dies to taste its fruits.
Now Scythian cold, 'tis true, reigns everywhere,
But none can think it will last on for aye:
To the political winter now endured
A more propitious season must succeed;
And all by various signs can estimate
That flowers and fruits we yet shall see in bloom.

As Rossetti has here mentioned his edition of Dante's *Comedy*, and his own *Psaltery*, and as references occur

* A reference to the progress of constitutional liberty in the Sardinian kingdom.—W.

later on to other publications of his, I may as well enter at once into some details in elucidation. After his arrival in England he printed the following works:—

1. 1826-7. Dante's *Inferno*, with a "Comento Analitico." The intention was to publish the whole of the *Divina Commedia*: but, the expense proving too great, the *Inferno* alone came out. The great majority of the comment on the *Purgatorio* was written —not any (I think) of that on the *Paradiso*. The MS. comment on the *Purgatorio* was presented by me in 1883 to the Municipality of Vasto, under a stipulation (volunteered by the Municipality itself) that they would print it; but this has not been done, and indeed the MS. volume was treated in a highly neglectful style. My father, when in Italy, was of course very well acquainted with Dante's poem; but he had not studied it with any keenness of scrutiny until he settled in London. When he did that, he soon reached the conclusion that the surface of Dante's *Commedia* is very different from its inner core of meaning. At first he considered the inner core to be political: the Empire and Ghibellinism, as against the Papacy and Guelfism. As he progressed his conceptions expanded, and he regarded Dante as a member, both in politics and in religion, of an occult society

having a close relation to what we now call Freemasonry; and he opined that the *Commedia* and other writings of Dante, and also the books of many other famous authors in various languages and epochs, are of similar internal significance. It is not my purpose here to discuss whether he was right or wrong: I hold that he was highly ingenious, that some of his reasonings deserve very careful attention, and that in several instances he pushed things too far. His comment on Dante, and subsequent writings in the same direction, excited some notice in Italy, and at least as much in England. Coleridge thought well of his speculations up to, but not beyond, a certain point; Isaac Disraeli was fully convinced by them; Arthur Hallam, and afterwards Panizzi and Schlegel, wrote in opposition. A learned German, Joseph Mendelssohn, lectured in Berlin on Rossetti's system, and published his discourses, which are more expository than critical, in 1843. A remarkable book (later than my No. 2) was brought out at Naples by Vecchioni, embodying a course of interpretation and argument closely resembling that of Rossetti, who never quite understood whether the conclusions of Vecchioni had been formed independently or not.

2. 1832. *Lo Spirito Antipapale che produsse la Ri-*

forma (The Anti-papal Spirit which produced the Reformation) develops and extends the ideas, which Rossetti had conceived during his study of Dante, as to a secret society to which that poet and many other writers belonged, and as to the essentially anti-Christian as well as anti-papal opinions covertly expressed in their writings. An English translation of this work was published.

3. 1833. The work to which the Autobiography has applied the name *Psaltery* is entitled *Iddio e l'Uomo, Salterio* (God and Man, a Psaltery). The majority of it was written in Malta: in London considerable additions and changes were made. Leaving some of his individual lyrics out of account, this may be regarded as the completest and best poetic work produced by Rossetti. In 1843 it was republished under a new title, *Il Tempo* (Time), and with some substantial modifications of plan. This book, and our No. 2, are down in the Pontifical *Index Librorum Prohibitorum.*

4. 1840. *Il Mistero dell' Amor Platonico del Medio Evo derivato dai Misteri Antichi* (The Mystery of the Platonic Love of the Middle Ages derived from the Ancient Mysteries). This extensive and rather discursive work, in five volumes, follows up the line of speculation and argument shown in Nos. 1 and 2.

Rossetti wrote it with a consciousness that the themes of religion or irreligion which it discusses were volcanic matter for readers to handle, as well as perilous to his own professional position in England. He therefore exhibited his subject with some amount of reticence, meandering through thickets of very audacious thought —the thought of great writers of the past as interpreted (but also to a great extent deprecated) by himself. This book was printed; but, as Mr Frere, partially seconded by Mr Charles Lyell, pronounced it to be foolhardy, it was withheld from publication in England, and was only put on sale on the Continent with precaution and in small numbers.

5. 1842. *La Beatrice di Dante*—an argument that Dante's Beatrice was not in any sense a real woman, but an embodiment of Philosophy. The reasoning extends a good deal beyond this limit, into regions explored in Nos. 1, 2, and 4. Rossetti completed the work in three disquisitions—or indeed, according to the final arrangement, in nine disquisitions. Only the first of these was published. The others were entrusted to a French writer, M. E. Aroux. He studied them, and published a book named *Dante Hérétique, Révolutionnaire, et Socialiste*—a book which my father, on seeing it in print, did not acknowledge as by any

means faithful to his own views. The MS. was returned to Rossetti: somehow it could never be found in our household until the close of 1900, when I discovered it, more or less complete, in an old portfolio.

6. 1846. *Il Veggente in Solitudine* (The Seer in Solitude) is a long poem of patriotic aim, in several books and all sorts of metres. Its main object is to denounce the then political and religious condition of Italy, and to forecast a better future. This is mixed up with a good deal of autobiographical matter, and with many lyrics of old time (some of them evincing Rossetti's very best work) interpolated into the context. As a rounded achievement of poetry, this book cannot be eulogized; it had, however, a great though clandestine circulation in Italy, roused enthusiastic feelings, and was so much prized that an honorary medallion of Rossetti, the work of Signor Cerbara, was struck.

7. 1847. *Versi*, published at Lausanne. This volume has not a directly patriotic or political complexion: it consists of many of Rossetti's best poems of early date, along with some of recent years.

8. 1852. *L'Arpa Evangelica* (The Evangelic Harp). Although printed in 1852, this volume only reached Rossetti's hands at an advanced date in 1853. It

consists of hymns and lyrics of a distinctly Christian, combined with an enlarged humanitarian, character. Several of the poems in this volume are now used in the Evangelical churches of Italy. I find twenty-one in a volume entitled *Inni e Cantici ad uso delle Chiese, Famiglie, Scuole, ed Associazioni Cristiane d'Italia.* Roma, 1897.

It may be as well to say here something as to my father's religious opinions. His parents were religious Catholics of the ordinary Italian type. His bringing-up was religious; and I suppose that, until manhood was well advanced, he acquiesced, without special zeal, in the established views and practices of Catholicism. As his political opinions progressed into active opposition to despotism and the foreign yoke, so did his religious opinions progress into active, and indeed very fierce, opposition to Papal dogma and pretensions, and to all that side of Roman Catholicism which pertains more to sacerdotal and hierarchical system than to the personality and the gospel utterances of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, he never ceased to cherish and reverence this original basis of Evangelical faith and practice. As I knew him from my earliest years (say from 1834), he adhered to no ecclesiastical sect whatever; and—allowing for the primitive-Christian

sympathy just referred to—he was certainly far more a free-thinker than definitely a Christian. As his writings were never of a personally anti-Christian tone (though they often developed the anti-Christian views of other authors), and *were* of an anti-papal tone, he became mixed up in his later years with Italian anti-papal Protestantizing religionists, to an extent greater than in his prime he would have tolerated. Towards 1849 disfrocked priests and semi-Waldensian semi-simpletons got a good deal about him, when broken health and precarious eyesight had to some extent enfeebled his mental along with his bodily powers; and association with these people and their publications did certainly not tend to promote a vigorous presentment of his essentially undogmatic but not essentially unspiritual mind. He came to write about Christian matters in terms suited to an absolute Christian believer; whereas, in fact, he was a devotional adherent to the moral and spiritual utterances of Jesus, but was not a practising member of any Christian denomination, nor a disciple in any theological school. It should be understood that, though a fervent and outspoken anti-papalist, he never expressly renounced the Roman Catholic faith. In the earlier years of his London sojourn it might have

been to his advantage (as Professor of Italian in King's College and elsewhere) to join the Anglican rather than the Roman communion; but this he considered unworthy of an Italian, and he never took any step in that direction. Neither did he naturalize himself as an Englishman.

The means of Gabriele Rossetti were never equal to paying the cost of expensive publications. My No. 1 was brought out by subscription; Nos. 2 and 4 by the spontaneous liberality of Mr Lyell, and, as far as No. 4 is concerned, Mr Frere came forward, as well, at the close. It is only fair to say that Rossetti was a laborious worker, of independent spirit; and, though he accepted with grateful satisfaction the volunteered bounty of Mr Lyell in these instances, and of Mr Frere in some others likewise, he was the least likely of men to go about to "ask, and ye shall receive."

As I have been speaking—with the distaste which I learned to feel for them as a class — of Protestantizing Italians, I will add that one excellent man I have known among them was my cousin Teodorico Pietrocola-Rossetti. He was in London in the later years of my father's life, but was not then taking an active part in the Evangelical propaganda to which he devoted all the closing part of his career. In 1883

he died in Florence, while conducting a service for his congregation. A great number of his hymns are in the collection *Inni e Cantici* before mentioned.

Back to my tale. And I should here premise
That, turning lengthened studies to account,
I undertook in Malta first to spread
A taste for our Italian literature;
And in distinguished houses not a few
To witness others' progress was my joy.
A Massic or Falernian wine no more
I drank, as oft in Naples I had done,
But quaffed the spirit of the classics now
Alone, and none could say, "Why gorge thyself?"
But, even in study laudable howe'er,
Intemperance is still condemnable.
Many, I know, find teaching wearisome,
Whereas to me 'twas profit and repute;
And I could all repeat from memory
The Comedy of Dante, mystical,
Tasso, Ariosto, drama, satirists,
Petrarch, Chiabrera, and some lyrists more.
Become the foremost of professors there,
I knew the most distinguished travellers
And highest officers of government:
Indeed, from titled man to boatman, all
Bore me affection—saving only one.

The Consul there from Naples was Gerardi,
Who constantly molested refugees.

One day that upon me he fixed his glance,
I cried: "You hangman's face, what see you in me?"
Confused he drooped his far from pleasant eyes,
And put the tail of him between his legs.
This serf of tyrant power endeavoured then
To get me turned adrift out of the isle,
When Albion's Sejanus, Castlereagh,
Was ordering to expel the fugitives:
But this Gerardi (he might cry with rage)
Had read my face "Noli me tangere."
As long as there I lived, I felt assured
That all the world contained no baser man;
But, when I saw in London a Minasi,*
I found that I had made a great mistake.
But such a name, by God, pollutes my lips.
No, let my mouth be nevermore befouled
To speak a most opprobrious brigand's name!
Go, galleys' rot, or rather gallows' rot,
Go, Ruffo's bravo† and worse knave than he!

Through that Gerardi, under-strapper of Kings,

* The name of Minasi was known to me from boyhood; but I am unable to say much about him, or to account in detail for the singular burst of rage and obloquy (here abridged) which my father bestows upon him. He held in London some official appointment (perhaps consular) from the Neapolitan Government, and refugees were prone to speaking of him as a spy—as to which, see p. 98.—W.

† Two members of the Ruffo family were conspicuous as Bourbon devotees from 1799 onwards. The Cardinal was the more important and celebrated; but I think the Principe di Castelcicala is here meant. He was an Ambassador, and as such he lived in London for some years during my father's sojourn.—W.

I saw from Malta hounded Rossaroll, *
And Carrascosa † and Abatemarchi, ‡
Capecelatro, § Florio, and many more;
And a Poerio,¶ in his rage convulsed,
Was first imprisoned, afterwards expelled.
And Pier de Luca (I record with tears
Thy fate, the flower of courteous learned men)
And Pier de Luca lost his reason hence,
And was in frenzy for some days and nights:
He trembled at Gerardi's very name,
And later on, to escape, he drowned himself.
O Castlereagh! Thy country rightly deems
That thy best service was thy suicide;
But why no suicide a year before?

Indignant I returned to England's masts,
For Malta grew to me insufferable.
A nest of corsairs Malta now meseemed,
Where, save that single man, all things I abhorred;
So to the seat imperial of the main

* General Rossaroll headed, in 1821, a short-lived insurrection in Messina.—W.

† General Michele Carrascosa took a leading part in the events of 1820-21 in the Kingdom of Naples. His conduct was not wholly approved by the constitutional party.—W.

‡ I do not distinctly recognize this name, nor those of Florio and de Luca.—W.

§ This must be Colonel Francesco Capecelatro, who was excepted from the amnesty granted by the King in September 1822. Thirteen persons in all were excepted; Rossetti figured as the thirteenth.—W.

¶ More than one member of the Poerio family suffered in these Neapolitan turmoils. The one who went to Malta was, I think, a major in the army.—W.

Thetis and Neptune re-conveyed my steps.
Nor shall I paint that lengthy voyaging,
Which in another poem * I described.

The curst Gerardi, in insulting terms,
Had written to the Bourbon Council-board
How that Rossetti, that incendiary,
Was to be found upon the British ship;
And cried the King: "Upon a sovereign's faith,
I'll do my utmost to get hold of him."
Well had that General Fardella said,
Who gave me secret pledge of friendliness,
That a malignant star detained me there,
Since o'er me impended a tremendous ire.
And I had stayed, at hazard of my life,
For full three months exposed to all the risk!
Following routine, the British Admiral
Was bidding farewell to the Sovereign;
And he perceived astonished that for rage
The King, like a hyæna, bit his lips.
Treating him almost as a menial, he
Said with an angry and imperious tone:
"Surrender that rebellious subject whom
You saved, and now to England would conduct."
And he with firmset aspect made reply:
"An English Admiral will not be base."
Menaces and entreaties he contemned,

* The *Veggente in Solitudine.* Rossetti, I gather, embarked from Malta in January 1824, and reached London in April. His first London residence was No. 37 Gerard Street, Soho.—W.

And turned his back on him resolvedly;
And, when that evening he returned aboard,
He told what was demanded and refused.
And such a fact cannot be called in doubt,
For all o'er Naples did its rumour run.

I felt myself so moved by that account
That, in the presence of his noble wife,
I with emotion kissed his saving hand.
Thee may God guerdon, mounted soul in heaven!
Twice over did I owe my life to thee,—
And gracious lady, God bless thee alike!

And I reflected: "Why in Ferdinand
Boils up against me such a fierce despite
That, not appeased by lifelong banishment,
He would inflict on me a barbarous death?
So much of rage against my civic song,
In which as father I so lauded him!
And how has he forgotten those my lines
Which drew the very tear-drops from his eyes?"

The savage spirit! When he heard me named,
His knees would jog beneath his body's weight,
And he against me, the poor exiled bard,
Was all a-tremble, furiously convulsed.
And thence a truthful penman wrote to me
He had himself from the fierce Bourbon heard—
"If even the court declares him innocent,
I'll make him die under the bastinade:
On public scaffold or in darkest crypt

Die he infallibly shall—and that I swear." *
Thus for a long while I remained in doubt
Of the true motive for such senseless rage:
But then the pen of a most worthy man
Gave me a light amid the obscurity.
What time the King of Naples had decamped,
And I had turned my course to another goal,
Some praise of me was heard by Gaspare Mollo
Duke of Lusciano, who was reckoned then
An able poet; and my fate so willed
That he desired to meet me face to face.
Of voluntary good-will he gave me proofs,
Which I responded to with modesty:
But, when he heard me improvise in verse,
Mollo became as jealous as a beast:
He in my presence spoke in jest alone,
But poured his insults forth behind my back.
He piqued himself the most on improvise:
He saw his primacy endangered much,
And tried his best to make me ludicrous.
And I upon his dramas and his rhymes
(For who can damp a youthful poet's fire?)
Launched a good ten or dozen epigrams,†
Which many men rehearsed with loud guffaws.

* I, of course, do not know whether this statement regarding Ferdinand I. is accurate or not. My father, I am sure, believed it: I more than once heard him recount it by word of mouth.—W.

† I know at least five of these. They are neat, and cannot have been gratifying to the Lord of Lusciano. Here is one:

"I read that tragedy whereof you wist;
And wept in pity . . . for the dramatist."—W.

For one he gave me, I returned him ten:
This was ill done, I know—but so I did.
Mollo kept brooding o'er his inward grudge,
Which well I read upon his pallid cheek.
Now, when the liberal Government had fall'n,
He was installed as President of a Board
To overhaul the writings then produced.
The President, and Censors in his wake,
From that explosion of anonymous print
Chose hundreds of inflammatory attacks,
And called them all my own—no fable this—
And showed me like a devil to the King.
And how that monumental lie disprove?
If even I had been Briareus,
Writing by night and day with hundred pens,
It would have been a thing impossible
To achieve that quantity of verse and prose.
A shameless slander! Yet my enemy
Mouths it against me, and the King believes.

This statement about the Duke of Lusciano may be quite true—a point as to which I am not competent to express an opinion. I have always understood, however, that one main professed grievance of the King against Rossetti was as follows (and in candour I state it here, as I did in my Memoir of Dante Rossetti):—At the time when an Austrian invasion of the Neapolitan territory, connived at by King Ferdinand, was imminent, Rossetti wrote a lyric ex-

pressive of the patriotic rage natural at the time, containing this quatrain addressed to the King—

"I vindici coltelli
Sapran passarvi il cor:
I Sandi ed i Luvelli
Non son finiti ancor."

(Avenging knives will be apt to pierce* your heart: the Sands and the Louvels are not yet done with). These lines clearly say that King Ferdinand, if he were to persist in a certain course, would be very liable to be assassinated; and, although they do not add that he *ought* to be assassinated, the Rè Nasone cannot have been solitary in scenting out that implication. There was also the affair (referred to on p. 50 as more than probable) that Rossetti had accompanied the Neapolitan troops, animating them by his verses to fight against the Austrians in defence of a constitution which the King, by a gross act of perjury, had then abolished.

We in the harbour of Naples made a stay
Two weeks almost—it gave me many a thrill.
The very aspect of the city enslaved

* Literally, "will know how to pierce." Sand (as it may be hardly requisite to say)was a German student who on political grounds assassinated the poet Kotzebue; Louvel, a Frenchman who assassinated the Duc de Berri, heir to the French throne.

Became for me a melancholy scene.
The vigilant Police, who day and night
Laid scores of snares if they might catch me so,
Set full a hundred spies around the ship
To learn who might be come to visit me—
But no one came ; and yet by means unknown
Earnest of friendship did not fail to reach.

But now the breeze is favouring, waves a-calm,
And the much longed-for moment is at hand.
How many mothers o'er their slaughtered sons
Wept on the shore because of that wild beast
Who for a five years' term had sheathed his claws,
And now unsheathed them in the lust of rage !

Joyful I turned my back on servitude,
And full of ardour sped toward Liberty.

Hail and thrice hail, O puissant Albion,
Who, ceaseless in diffusing trades and arts,
Thine irresistible trident dost extend
Over the immense four quarters of the world.
If thou, devout to rightful liberty,
Impart'st to others its inspiring rays,
Thou, arbiter of warfare and of peace,
Wilt become mightier than antique Rome.
Will it, and thou redeem'st a world oppressed,
For thy determined will ensures result.
America, thy rival and thy child,
If thou dost fail, will do it later on:
She in her nascent empire will become

The foremost nation of the rounded world.
She 'll be thy rival, truly glorious,
For still in her gigantic state she grows;
But not vociferous conceited France,
Free and enslaved at once, as if by Fate.
In you two all is diverse—customs, tongues;
Her mark is impetus, and reason thine.
Since my arrival, England, much thou hast done,
Yet much remains to do—do it thou wilt.

Hardly had I set foot upon the land
But I around me felt a freer air:
'Mid grand activity which knows no pause
I found my own increasing day by day;
And by the influences which wove my web
After the poet's came the scholar's turn.
Accounting precious every instant's time
In high conceptions I was all immersed:
Dante, with Analytic Commentary,
Was the first outcome of my new pursuits:
And, spite of all disparagement, the work
Earns me the sympathy of distinguished men.
Charles Lyell, having read it, to me wrote,
Giving clear pledge of unsolicited
Regard—a Scotchman he, of lofty mind,
And Allighieri's signal devotee:
He on my heart, which honours his deserts,
Is still impressed, after the unequalled Frere.
And now him also doth the urn enclose,*
And bitter tears he leaves me to outpour.

* Mr Lyell died in 1849.—W.

I say it again ; no longer in the heat
Of Massic or Falernian, nor indeed
Of politics, I set to tracing out
Our classic writers' anti-papal spirit,
With critical mind—confuting carping tongues ;
To Lyell did I dedicate the book.

Stately an University had risen
In this enormous capital of the realm : *
And now the Council, from whose midst emerged
Such ample learning sacred and profane,
Offered me of its own accord the chair
Allotted to Italian literature.

To Italy, to flout three Kings, I sped
My fame, and triumphed over lies with truth.
Let Tyranny hate me, while my country loves,—
Her exiled son has never wrought her shame ;
And this I know—despite all senseless rage,
My books have made their way from hand to hand.
And not those hymns alone where I forecast
The Ausonian Genius' future rapt in thought ; †

* The London University, consisting of University College and King's College. Rossetti competed for the Italian Professorship in the former, but Panizzi obtained it ; afterwards (1831) in the latter, and there he was elected.—W.

† This phrase must designate the *Salterio*, though the term would almost equally apply to the *Veggente in Solitudine*. The three prose works mentioned in the sequel are the *Mistero dell' Amor Platonico*, the *Beatrice di Dante*, and *Roma verso la Metà del Secolo Decimonono*. This last, though separately published, is in fact a long note printed in the *Amor Platonico*.—W.

But that Arcanum of Platonic Love
Which offers in five tomes broad scrutinies,
Where pondering I analyse the myths
Of every country, every faith and age;
And that in which I showed symbolic all
Our Allighieri's mystic Beatrice,
Delineated by the schemes occult
Of most remote gymnosophistic times,
Which schools of magians had inherited,
And through the Mysteries bequeathed to us;
Also that other noted by its name,
Rome toward the Middle of our Century.
In each my work, to freedom dedicate,
I demonstrate the iniquities of priests:
In all that I expounded nought I feigned,
But drew my facts from pages thousandfold.

Immoderate study always is unwise,
But, if 'tis noxious, it amounts to guilt.
No, that which I have published, much though it be,
Is but the half of what I've written down.
Ah for my blindness whom have I to blame,
When by myself my eyes were done to death?

Having in England stayed my roaming course,
And seeing my future less ambiguously,
Like Dante's, "Vita Nuova!"* was my word:
He wrote but I resolved to practise it.
"Let warm affections in my novel lot
Arise," I said, "to populate my breast.

* *i.e.* "a new life."—W.

GAETANO POLIDORI

From a Pencil-Drawing by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

1853

Within the hotbed of our vicious times
Love proffered me its frenzies and remorse:
But, never a seducer, still seduced,
Quicksand to quicksand, angry seas I ploughed:
Now let a holier love possess my soul,—
May he who churned it up restore its calm."
And prudent reason here will not disclose
What and how many tempests I endured.
Upon my canvas be concealed, concealed,
The flush upon my brow in others' shame. *
And on those quicksands while I fix my gaze
A dreadful shudder creeps along my veins,
And in that shudder I my visage smite,
Uttering a curse against my weaknesses.
The quicksands are afar, the harbour's here.

Settled in London, all my travels past,
Among the men I most was pleased to meet,
Gaetano Polidori, learned, wise,
Who had been Count Alfieri's secretary,
'Mid all the Italians whom I had known as yet
Appeared to merit honour and esteem.
Teaching was his profession. He had done
No small translating-work, had much composed.
Tuscan by birth, by accent all the more,
An elegant writer both in prose and verse,
He showed me, joined with candid character,
The strictest morals and a cultured mind.

* Not only in writing, but also in conversation, all matters of this sort were left in oblivion by my father. I, at any rate, never heard him refer to them, even distantly.—W.

Upon the day when I returned his call,
And saw him 'mid his well-bred family,
I twice and thrice fixed my admiring eyes
Upon the second daughter's comeliness.
A single moment regulates a life:
My heart became the lodestone, she the pole.
And every hour my love became more keen
When hundred virtues and no self-conceit . . .
I know that what I'm writing she dislikes,*
But, hiding it from her, I speak it still:
Knowing her fully, I have often said—
Angel in soul, and angel in her looks.
Feeling within me glow the lighted flame,
I wrote to Polidori, and 'twas thus:
"If to the gracious name of friend you please
To add the loving name of son as well
(Pray Heaven that so it may be!) be not loth
To give the enclosed into your Frances' hands.
If this displease you, little though it were,
If so it haps you disapprove my suit,
Throw the two letters both into the fire,
And speak of this no more; but pray concede
Our friendship be not sundered, yours and mine,—
You so would punish my straightforwardness."
A day being past, the maid to me so dear
Gave me a most affectionate response;

* This is perfectly accurate. Mrs Rossetti shrank from being eulogized in verse which might one day be published, and I have known her to plead for the omission of some such matter written by my father. To me, naturally, it is as pleasant to publish these not exaggerated praises as to her it was unpleasant to conceive them published.—W.

And at the altar after four months more
We vowed between us two a mutual faith.*
In marriage-knot at summit of my hopes,
My days went by in cheerful industry.
As sweet reward of honourable zeal,
My credit made advance from day to day.
Four only children Heaven conceded me,
And all the four I see around me still,
The issue of affections tender and true
In the four opening matrimonial years.

To speak about my wife I shall not pause,—
Others would think it overcharged, inept:
This I may tell—she is a blooming graft
Of English mother and of Tuscan sire;
Through mother and through sire in her one sees
Two nations tempering the mind and heart.
Let me but say that in her is evinced
Frankness of manner unpremeditate;
That she both speaks and writes three high-prized tongues,
Which rank 'mong Europe's choicest and most rich;
And, when their authors she was studying,
She culled the flower of the three literatures.
That firm-fixed character which she displays
Founded, by means of Jesus' gospel-book,
Upon religion pure morality,
Upon morality the purest life;
Thus she presents, perfect on every side,

* The date of the proposal was 7th December 1825; of the wedding (Roman Catholic and English Church), 8th and 10th April 1826.—W.

The steadfast woman of the sacred page.
From living pattern oh what strength the love
Of ethical instructions must receive!
Wherefore to her more than myself is due
Our children's educating discipline;
For of each rule she utters with her lips
They see in her the breathing prototype.
I never had occasion for a school,
Too apt to vitiate a guileless heart;
For she in her two daughters had betimes
Transfused a taste for music;* in all four
(Presenting now this model and now that)
The taste for letters and the beautiful.
In theory and in practice, both alike,
Her life is a fine treatise on the good:
Always a Christian, not a fanatic,
Always devout, but not ecstatical:
Heavens, what a woman! her Anglo-Italian soul
Has never trespassed over duty's bound.
'Tis now five lustres I have made her mine,
And in five lustres I still see her the more
An angel harmony of deeds and words,
And in five lustres her all-blameless life
Has not one moment, one, belied itself.
I thank my God that, when he addressed my heart
To new affections, he made these be high:
And you, beloved children, thank you me
That such a mother I chose to give you breath.

* Taken literally, this is of course correct. But my mother had only an ordinary modicum of musical practice and aptitude, and neither of my sisters pursued the art with any zest.—W.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI
From a Pencil-Drawing by Dante Gabriel Rossetti
C. 1846

Others perhaps will say that every bird
(An ancient saw) approves his proper nest.
Maria, Christina, William, Gabriel,
My children, *you*'ll reply, and that's enough.

My loving girls, in whom my soul descries
A heavenly mind in virgin modesty,
Of intellect and ethics you have given
Already a shining proof in prose and verse: *
You from a double looking-glass, it seems,
Reflect upon us all your mother's soul.

As from a twin-branched fountain-source there spurt
Rills of fresh lymph to inundate a mead—
So sometimes sister-like do poetry
And painting beautify the selfsame mind:
And both unite in you, my Gabriel,
And fertilize your soul, and give it fire.
These like two fountains both in you upflow,
Both in you like two torches are alight;
And, while you make them brightly manifest,
They both prepare in you exalted work.
Run and attain the duplicated goal,
Though yours is the most early dawn of life:
As able poet I hear you already hailed,

* The reference to "ethics" must be chiefly based on Maria Rossetti's religious allegory named *The Rivulets*, semi-published in 1846. As to Christina, her volume entitled *Verses* had been privately printed in 1847, and the poems which she contributed to *The Germ* (following a brace in *The Athenæum*) appeared in 1850.—W.

Already as able painter see you admired.*
Now onward, and the double race-course win !
You will be doing what I could not do.

If 'tis not vanity, almost re-born
I feel in person, even in countenance,
My calm-attempered William, in yourself,†
Thought in your eyes, and on your lips a smile.
In two dead languages and four that live
Already Truth converses with your mind.

My children, grow, grow up to patriot love ;
In you the blood and name of me is stored
To England from Abruzzo transmigrate.
Free you were born, and I was born a serf.
O Providence ! Mine exile seemed to me
The dire injustice of a Fate my foe ;
But, if mine exile's fruitage was to prove
A family like this, I bless the ban.
Yes, for thy deadly rage which hurled me forth,
Perfidious Bourbon King, I give thee thanks.

The thirteenth lustre have I now o'erstept
Of veteran life used to the field of fight ;

* These expressions need not count as an exaggeration. By 1850 Dante Gabriel had exhibited two pictures (one of them now in the National British Gallery) ; he had published *The Blessed Damozel* and other remarkable poems, and had done a multitude of translations from Italian, and some from German, poets.—W.

† I question whether my father was right in supposing me to resemble him in person ; I should say that, of the two, Dante Gabriel resembled him more. I have suppressed some lines representative of fatherly fondness more than of myself.—W.

And, never deviating from myself,
I glory in a changeless character.
A splendid servitude enchants me not:
Dying I'll cry "All life to Italy!"
From the first day when her I knew oppressed,
I envied any who could give her aid.
Not for *my* sake I loved her, but for hers,
When I devoted to her rest and life.
But there are some who, posed as Liberals,
Defame with such a title country and self:
And things I have to tell so silly or mean
That but to think of them my stomach turns.

But, ere I yield me to indignant zeal,
I sever the few good from numerous bad.
You who, despite the despots and the priests,
As firm Italians have revealed yourselves,
Ricciardi and Cagnazzi and Saliceti,
Gazzola, Mamiani, and Muzzarel,*
You let Fame publish in all time and place,
You and some others—yet ye are but few.

* The Conte Giuseppe Ricciardi was a prominent Republican politician, an attached friend of Rossetti. He exerted himself incessantly in the Italian cause; his death took place towards 1885. Terenzio Mamiani was an admired writer in verse and prose; Monsignor Muzzarelli a very open-minded churchman. Cagnazzi (I presume the same person) is spoken of by General Guglielmo Pepe as the "venerable archdeacon Luccado Samuele Cagnazzi, a profound and learned economist," who became President of the Neapolitan Parliament in 1848. The other names, Saliceti and Gazzola, are identified by me less clearly than probably they ought to be. Pepe, the hero of Venice in 1848-9, was the same who had been the hero of Naples in 1820.—W.

And where, immortal Pepe, leave I thee,
Who wreath'st young laurel upon hoary hair?
Sole Garibaldi is compeer of thine—
The sword of Venice thou, and he of Rome:
Tarpeian Eagle and Lion of Adria
Maintained by you two a determined strife.
By virtue of you Venice and Rome exclaim:
"All have we lost, 'tis true, but honour not;
For ne'er, undaunted heroes, did you yield
Save to the greater number and adverse fate.
Ye both, our century's honour, have pursued
The good of Italy and not your own."

That my father was most right in saying, "And where, immortal Pepe, leave I thee?" will be generally allowed by persons cognizant of the facts. I sincerely regret that he did not add, "And where, immortal of immortals, Mazzini, leave I *thee*?" As he did not add that, I must say a few words to account for so grave an omission.

Mazzini did not settle in London until 1837. It was inevitable that two such patriots and exiles as Mazzini and Rossetti should know one another. There was a great amount of mutual respect between them (of which my Appendix furnishes ample proof), but not anything like constant personal intercourse — in fact, I do not recollect having even once seen Mazzini in our house, but I have occasionally seen him else-

where. To Italy and freedom they were equally devoted, and the great conception of Italian unity was present to the minds of both. But Mazzini was a determined Republican, which Rossetti was not — being, from the course of his experiences and reflections, more in favour of a constitutional monarchy, though by no means unsympathetic with the idea of a Republic at the rare conjunctures when it emerged as having some practical application: he was never a member of the Giovine Italia. Mazzini was also, by nature and circumstance, an incessant conspirator, and promoted a number of unpromising and abortive insurrections, foredoomed to failure, and viewed with regret, and at times even with great repugnance, by such Italians as were not committed to the extremest forms of political theory and practice. It is no business of mine to express an opinion whether Mazzini or Rossetti was the more nearly in the right; but it has always been my conviction that, had it not been for the agitation so strenuously kept alive by the sublime Genoese patriot, the emancipation and unifying of Italy would not have taken place so soon as they did.

It happened that towards 1850, when my father was writing his Autobiography, he was particularly

alienated from the policy pursued by Mazzini and his adherents. The great revolutionary year, 1848, had witnessed uprisings in various parts of Italy (an insurrection in Messina had preceded the French Revolution of February 1848 against Louis Philippe), followed by a regular campaign between the Piedmontese and the Austrians; this was renewed in 1849. In both instances the Austrians were the victors; and many patriotic Italians, including Rossetti, opined that this disastrous result had in large measure been brought about by a Mazzinian agitation (I will not pretend to say how far Mazzini himself was personally responsible for it) which repelled aid that might possibly have been forthcoming from some foreign powers, especially republican France, and denounced the Piedmontese sovereign, Charles Albert, as covertly a traitor to the Italian cause for which he was fighting. I can thus understand a certain feeling on my father's part which, when he undertook to "sever the few good from numerous bad," among Italians "posed as Liberals," withheld him from expressly naming the great protagonist of the national movement, Mazzini, although he indisputably, in his own mind, included him in the roll of "the few good." Even so the omission is to be regretted.

As to the question of Rossetti's estimate of Republicanism (to which, as I have already said, he preferred, for practical purposes, a constitutional monarchy), the following distinct profession of faith seems worth preserving. Its date cannot be earlier than June 1850, and is probably a little later. It was written to introduce a poem—not, I think, any that has been published.

"After having seen what is almost always the issue of a democratic republic, more than once attempted in Europe; having seen that, barbarous, sanguinary, fratricidal, predaceous, and atheistic, in France in the last century, it ended in the absolute despotism of Bonaparte; and that, although mild, gentle, generous, and believing, in our own century, it is about to merge into the augmenting despotism of another Bonaparte, who does not even possess the fascination of the military and political successes and the talents of the first; how can ever this blessed Republic still abide in the hearts of so many Italians who sincerely love their country? And yet it does abide. . . . And was it not this desire which produced among us the discord of minds in 1848, and caused all our subsequent reverses? Oh if all the Italians had then unanimously combined with Charles Albert to expel the

common enemy from our sacred soil—oh if many inconsiderate men had not, with the cry of 'Republic' which they proclaimed with so much fervour, first dismayed that sovereign, and afterwards damped his enthusiasm for Italian independence—at this hour not one German foot would be insolently stamping our land, and Italy would not be such as she has miserably returned to being. Pius IX. himself took fright at that name; and, retreating from the glorious path which he was already footing, he ended by betraying us. A melancholy story this — which has made, makes, and will make, all who love Italy shed prolonged tears.

"'But then you have no liking for a Republic?' To any who ask me this, I shall answer: Yes, I like it, and that far better than others do; but I like one which would not have severed from us either Charles Albert or Pius IX., and which would have conduced to our obtaining that national independence that was the ardent longing of all Italians. . . . I like that Republic which alone can suit the interest of all, and which alone seems capable of enduring in Italy, or indeed in modern Europe.

"Whilst our hapless country had a prospect of good success, I wrote these few extemporized octaves,

which might furnish occasion for many notes, so as to establish more fully what such a *Republic without peril* ought to be—which I have always desired, and now more than ever desire. . . . I felt my heart touched in re-reading these stanzas; and, rude and unpolished as they are, I yet transcribe them, so that they may bear evidence that my soul did not participate in that political offence which was the cause of our disasters."

After this rather long digression, I return to the Autobiography, and its contrast beween "the few good" and the "numerous bad" Italians.

> But ah how few there are that acted thus!
> With us a most repulsive crew combined,
> Seeking to fish in troubled water-streams.
> 'Mong scanty good men many bad escaped,
> A show of baseness and of wretchedness:
> These brought dishonour on the refugees
> In French and Portuguese and Spanish soil;
> But here in England unexpectedly
> There came to settle down the best and worst.
> I grieved for famished men and mendicants
> Who had recourse to swindling and intrigue:
> But Paolelli who became a spy,
> And wrought out General Turrigo's death,*
> And other such, Italy's sorrow and shame,

* I cannot elucidate this matter of Paolelli and Turrigo.—W.

Made me repent—but this I will not say.
Bozzelli was a Liberal of this kind,
And acted it with comic gravity;
And, viler than Borrelli, vilest man,
Betrayed anon his country for a "place." *
The royal beasts having re-sought their dens,
Scoundrels in crowds go to consort with them;
Rome, Naples, Lombardy, and Tuscany,—
I turn my indignant eye from such a horde.

And then reposefully my glance can pause
Upon the upright whom Heaven has with me leagued,
And who, inflamed with patriot charity,
Reverberate on me their proper light.
In a great cause we fell, and from that day
We share the sacredness of Fortune's blows.
On reaching London, from the very first
I knew some trustworthy, some faithless souls:
These base Minasi set upon my track,
And I—fool that I was—discerned it not.
But all the emigrating company

* Bozzelli became Minister of the Interior in Naples in 1848, when Ferdinand II. pretended to re-commence a constitutional government; he was afterwards Prime Minister, conniving in the cause of reaction. During the brief simulation of constitutionalism, General Pepe had much influence over the Government, and he advocated the recall of Rossetti to Naples. My father was nearly on the brink of returning thither, with his family, when the Liberal movement was quenched in blood. The other minister here mentioned, Borrelli, belongs to the earlier constitution of 1820-21; he was Minister of Police, and persuaded the Parliament to authorize the departure of Ferdinand I. from Naples; an event which was pretty soon followed by the repeal of the constitution, and the proscription of its abettors.—W.

Treated me brother-like—save only one.*
Still, if in me he blames and snaps on all,
For all that's mine he deems detestable,
He prized my steadfast politics alone,
And, joined with this, my blameless moral course:
As for the rest, he wants all men to sniff
In me the agreeable smell which donkeys yield.
But wherefore in him did such rage collect?
I know not, I: I saw him only once,
When some one showed him to me in the street.

Italy, subject of mine every thought,
Thine exiled son found kindness everywhere
In hundreds of high-hearted foreigners:
Only one exiled brother's fatal hate . . .
Yet this disgrace is common, and I pause.

Behold I waken from the dream of life,
And all the past meseems a flitting shade.
Before I quit the earth, or—better so—
Before I there return and sleep in peace,

* This diatribe is directed against Sir Antonio Panizzi, whose name i,s in the original, given at the close of it: I reduce it here to a comparative trifle, but have not thought it desirable to miss it out entirely. My father considered that, for some reason or none, Panizzi had from the first been ill-disposed towards him; and this feeling was strengthened when Panizzi published an article (or articles) opposing, and partly ridiculing, my father's theories concerning Dante, etc. I am not sure that I ever read the articles; probably they were bitter (for Panizzi was the reverse of mealy-mouthed); but, when a man says that Beatrice did not exist, and that Dante was a sort of Freemason, he must expect that people who are of a contrary opinion will express themselves forcibly.—W.

I think it time to make my testament,
For now I feel me on the bed of death.

It shall be brief indeed. What can I say?
I will repeat with other sufferers—
I leave my corpse to earth, my soul to God,
Of whom I ask forgiveness of my sins.
I trust in Christ, and cheer me with the thought
That his true dogma I have tried to avow.
I pardon all, yes all, my enemies.

More than one work of mine lies on my hands;
Something I think it well to say of them.
I have indited a great roll of rhymes,
Eight volumes*—to my country they're bequeathed.
Four I have published; † four I leave behind,
Which are extemporaneous almost all,—
For, having reached the arduous goal of life,
A popular poet's title I desire.
The book I called *Arpa Evangelica*,
Which aims the man-God's worship to promote,
Will prove—and would it were already in print!—
Grateful to pious souls, I doubt not this.
With what rapidity I wrote the book!
It seemed as if I knew the whole by heart.
Those hymns are not of all one calibre,
But all of them evince a feeling soul.

* They might rather be called notebooks than volumes.—W.

† This seems to refer to the volume named—*Versi*, 1847; also to poems contributed to an Italian Protestantizing magazine, *L'Eco di Savonarola*.—W.

I did it in three months—the vein ran quick.
In volumes twain, where I make practical
Rights linked to duties, which I specify,
To which I have appropriately given
The title Politic-Dogmatic Lyre,
Eschewing style fantastic or bizarre,
'Gainst all despotic power I hurl my words.
Then in the fourth, mid plaudits, pomps, and rites,
I sang that man * whom many wrote about,
Who first deceived us all, and then betrayed.
Pœnitet me fecisse is my finale:
I hate as once I loved thee—Man of Fraud!

The work however where with critic thoughts
My mind has spatiated and rested most,
And where I have sought out the essential truth
Of Dante's Beatrice, as yet concealed,
Is that in which I clasp a mighty orb,
As 'twere, and thereon most I plume myself.
In this the mystic diction I expound
Of which I recollect I spoke before.
A sample of it I printed ten years back
In one Discourse alone, but now they are nine.
"This, more than poems," I sometimes exclaim,
"May prove my passport to a future age."

I, if my life is now a bitter one,
Can still, amid my very sorrows, say:
"I live a freeman,—at my country's shrine

* Pius IX.—W.

Freedom for me becomes a form of faith :
And as I lived I'll die—a sacred vow."

And, while I look on all my bygone life,
The year of this our century forty-three
With black stone noted figures on the roll :
I fancied I should die, but sore mishap
Left me my life but took my sight away.*
Worn down and down by bronchial sufferings,
From January until September increased,
I yet, exhaling in my verse my woes,
Nurtured my mind with patriotic thoughts :
And daybreaks of the Seer in Solitude
Shed on my visioned spirit glowing beams :
No, those were not fantastical ideas,
For to men's eyes they are daily verified.†

But ah my life now dwindles more and more,
And hurries toward its occidental dusk ;
Yet I enjoyed aforetime strenuous health,
Which for grave constant study made me apt :
And, now that old and blind I cling to that,

* My father lost totally, and very suddenly, the sight of one eye. After that he was in constant danger of losing also the sight of the other eye, and he often expected that this would soon be lost. He did, however, to the end of his life, retain a much enfeebled modicum of eyesight. In the *expectation* of becoming wholly blind, he often spoke and wrote of himself as blind—an exaggeration, but a pardonable one.—W.

† The poem *The Seer in Solitude* (*Il Veggente in Solitudine*) has been previously mentioned. It is true that some of the ideas presented in that poem as visions or presages—as to the liberation of Italy, etc.—were getting "daily verified" even in Rossetti's lifetime, and much more conspicuously so a few years afterwards.—W.

I feel that habit serves me more than drugs.
How could I curb myself? For I confess
My heart vibrates to thousand impulses;
Existence is almost the same as thought,—
To live and nought to do I cannot brook.
A course of living honourable and hard
A poet I began, a poet end.

But, if I am condemned to days so black,
At least let Tyranny not therefor joy.
I, in this night to which no dawn ensues,
Record a vow to raise my chaunt 'gainst her
So long as life endures, and yet beyond—
For even when I am silent in the earth
To war on her in verse will I persist.
Great God, to whom I hymning wafted prayers
Of Italy—diseased, betrayed, unvenged—
Thou didst preserve me, I know, that I might wage
War on the wretch who in man insults Thyself.
Who knows, who knows but for my latest days
Thou mayest have held reserved a greater strength?
Perchance Thou hast reft mine eyes that I might turn
Back to that poesy which I had left;
Thought prompts me that for this supreme intent
Thou a blind instrument will'st me of Thine hand.
How haps it that the old man's heart glows young,
And in him life and daring are re-greened?
How haps it that his soul's a looking-glass,
So to reflect the future's burst of flame?
A light of prophecy salutes his eyes,
A voice of prophecy salutes his lips.

Magnify, magnify the name of Him
Who knots the mighty bindings of events—
Him by whose hand I, an obscure young man,
Was drawn into the strife of politics.
I nought, He all. I comprehend His power,
And for my very ills I yield Him thanks.
All the less possible the victory seems,
So much the greater is the glory of God ! *

To Thee, great God, I owe devoutest praise,
In that, before I sleep the eternal sleep,
In the Subalpine noble Realm I see
Already a liberal form of better rule.
If all has gone to wreckage in the storm,
At least this single plank remains to us.

And nigh to death I still can joy and chaunt,
And can foresee more favourable days.
From the two sees which they so much befouled
Refractory priests a pair have been dismissed ; †
And without mitre on their tonsured scalps
One takes his way to France, and one to Rome.

* Rossetti here, and in some other parts of the Autobiography, speaks of himself in an *exalté* tone, as imbued with a spirit of prophecy, an instrument in the divine hand for combating despotism, etc. All this would have seemed forced and presumptuous to a reader of his own day ; yet it was not a mere distempered dream. In less than ten years from the date of his writing, the thunderbolt had fallen, and Italian despots and Papal temporal dominion were in the agonies of dissolution.—W.

† Rossetti here dilates (at a length which I have much curtailed) on a matter now perhaps well-nigh forgotten, the exile in 1850 of the Archbishops of Turin and Cagliari for obstructing certain laws passed by the Piedmontese Parliament as a check upon the privileges of the Church.—W.

Those desecrated altars wait you there
Whence Christ indignant has withdrawn his foot:
There full a thousand demons are your peers,—
Sole Bonaparte and Pius distance you.

Fair Kingdom which, to avenge that double scorn,
Art now expelling the two mitred fiends,
Wherefore dost thou retain a hateful cult
Which Petrarch called a "school of fallacies"?
Oh let the Man of Sin and Realm of Sin,
Pitiful God, come to their end at last!

Farewell, farewell for ever, land beloved,
To whom I joyed to vow my whole of life;
And, while thy foe remains upon the throne,
I evermore against him will to fight.
Yes, I will fight till underground I sink. . . .
And yet I feel alas all vigour wanes:
What is the use of will bereft of strength?

Moaning I quit mine arms: and to the last
Of hours my daytime goes precipitant.
O land of Liberty, accept my thanks;
O hour of my repose, I greet thee well.
When he has footed a disastrous road,
And night without a star engirds him round,
The wearied traveller searches for repose,
Waiting until the dayspring rise anew:
Yes, sleep in quiet, you are tired indeed,
But nevermore the sun for you will rise.
If you have done your duty, happy you,

And for your dust your country prays for peace.
If, sleeping in the earth, you wake in heaven,
Amid the daylight without even and dawn,
Each of your sufferings here becomes a claim,
And in your garland like a jewel shines.
There you will hold, amid the angelic throng,
Fixed on the Eternal Sun insatiate eyes.
Where summer burns not nor doth winter chill,
I shall again embrace thee, O my wife,
Within that everlasting nuptial-bond
Which never hand of Death can sunder more.
There I await thee, thou art sure to come:
Who worthier than thou of that abode?
I know what sun will in thy pilgrimage
Serve as the guide to thine unswerving feet.
Be, in the zenith of thy life and path,
Be thou the escort of our children loved;
This duty when thou wholly hast fulfilled,
Well know'st thou who expects thee above the spheres.
When these my wearied eyelids shall be closed,
Her steps, beloved children, follow ye:
Of her be worthy—and of me perchance—
And unto us you four will all return.
Oh glad the day when seated 'mid you all,
I shall see Paradise for me complete!
Ah let not one of you be wanting there!
And, when you shall ascend to our embrace,
Speak to me of Italy, speak one by one,
For then her state will not endure the same.

Oh if in heaven one day the fame should spread

That she anew resurges free and grand!
Hosannah and hosannah 'mid the harps
Of gold a thousand toward the Eternal Breath
I shall intone: Hosannah in infinite
Chorus, Hosannah, shall the Saints resound:
And in the new augmented jubilee
Far lovelier to me Paradise will show.

Oh let the prison unclose where I am shut!
My penal period has fulfilled its term.

And here the versified Autobiography also fulfils its term.

The desire for death, expressed in verse, was genuinely present to Gabriele Rossetti's mind. Ever since the break-up of his health — which came to a severe crisis in 1843, followed by partial blindness, and that by many and increasing infirmities, paralytic and other—he found life more burdensome than otherwise, and would willingly have resigned it but for his earnest wish to work for the benefit of his family. Even the power of remunerative work failed towards 1847, when he had to resign his professorship at King's College. Troublous public events ensued; the tergiversation of Pope Pius IX., the defeat of the Piedmontese and other Italians by the Austrian armies, the crushing of the Roman Republic by a French expedition. These

and other political occurrences greatly darkened the closing years of Rossetti ; and yet he was unconquerably hopeful as to a more or less near future, and the result justified his hopes.

I will summarize very briefly the events of his life subsequent to the date of the Autobiography, say 1850.

Rossetti being now, by failure of health and eyesight, debarred from professional work—though he always continued diligent in no common degree as a writer, principally in verse—the support of the family devolved in large part on our mother, who went out teaching, and at one time conducted a small day-school in London. The four children were, at the end of 1850, in this position :—Maria, aged twenty-three, a teacher of Italian, French, etc. ; Dante Gabriel, aged twenty-two, a painter struggling to sell his pictures and make a position ; Christina, aged just twenty, assisting our mother when the day-school was going on, otherwise without regular employment ; myself, aged twenty-one, a clerk in the Inland Revenue Office and art-critic of *The Spectator*—my earnings of course scanty, but on the whole the least precarious among the slender resources of the family. As the day-school in London brought in no income worth speaking of, Mrs Rossetti, seeing some prospect of an opening at Frome-Selwood,

Somerset, started another day-school there in the spring of 1853; her husband and Christina accompanied her. This school proved no more successful than its predecessor; and, as by the end of 1853 I was beginning to advance a little in my office, I got the family to re-unite in London from Lady-day 1854, and had the satisfaction of housing my suffering father in his last days. The house was named 45 Upper Albany Street, Regent's Park—later on, 166 Albany Street. The end came very soon, 26th April 1854.

I subjoin here two obituary notices. The first was written by Conte Giuseppe Ricciardi, on 1st May 1854, and published in the *Opinione* of Turin. The second was written by myself, and published in *The Spectator*, 6th May. In the latter there are a few details (of dates etc.) which I now know to be not absolutely correct, but I leave them as they stand. I could cite a great number of other eulogistic tributes, more especially since 1882, but need not launch out upon these.

(*a*) "Italian emigrants, and with the emigrants all Italy, are constrained to mourn another loss. The earliest, the most venerable, of the exiles, the illustrious Gabriele Rossetti, died in London on the evening of 26th April, after a banishment of thirty-three years—all of them spent in upholding the sacred Italian cause. . . .

"Rossetti, an extemporaneous poet already known and

valued by the public at the date, 1820, when in Naples the revolution broke out which came to such a wretched end in the following year, composed, among other lyrics, the splendid hymn, 'Sei pur bella cogli astri sul crine,' to which I find nothing to be compared except the other lyric brought out by himself in London in 1831, beginning 'Sù brandisci la lancia di guerra'; and this too records another hapless revolution! . . .

"It is needless to say that not a few writings of the highly distinguished author remain unpublished; pre-eminent among which are Parts II. and III. of his Comment on the *Divine Comedy*. For this (shall I say it?) I have in vain, up to the present date, sought out a publisher—so miserable are the conditions of Italian literature.

"Rossetti, besides being, as all know, an eminent poet and renowned scholar, was a fervent patriot, always most constant to his principles, and a man of unsullied virtue, so that he was revered even by his political enemies, and no one ever ventured to assail his reputation in the least degree; while all who came to have a little knowledge of him soon got to love him."

(*b*) "Gabriele Rossetti, the most daringly original of the commentators on Dante, died on the 26th ultimo, in London, in his seventy-second year.

"Born on the 28th February 1783, in Vasto, a sea-coast town in the Kingdom of Naples, he first visited the capital in the capacity of secretary to the Marquis of Vasto, but for the purpose of following, under the auspices of that nobleman, the profession of a painter. His tastes soon took a more decided bent, however, towards literature. He developed a particular talent as a poetical improvisatore; and his poems, both recited and written, gained him con-

siderable reputation. For some while he held the official post of poet to the Theatre of San Carlo. He afterwards entered the Museo Borbonico, as sub-director of the collection generally, and curator of the splendid sculptural department,—a position which led him to devote especial attention to the then fresh explorations at Pompeii and Herculaneum. Here he remained for fifteen years; with an interval of seven months, ending with the Pope's return in 1813, during which he was at Rome, summoned thither by Murat as a member of the Provisional Government. Courses of lectures and literary instruction also occupied his time. With the restoration of King Ferdinand came the spread of Carbonarism; and Rossetti enrolled himself as a member of that society of national reformers. The short-lived constitution of 1821 succeeded — to expire in nine months; leaving those who, like Rossetti, had hailed its advent with enthusiasm, exposed to the rancour of tyrannic reaction. His patriotic verses were his crime, and proved his rescue. The wife of Admiral Sir Graham Moore had read and admired them: the Admiral was then in Naples; and he prevailed on the poet to terminate by flight the cruel suspense of three months' concealment, and to embark on board an English vessel in the disguise of a lieutenant. His first asylum was Malta, where he enjoyed and appreciated the intimate friendship of the Right Honourable J. Hookham Frere; two years afterwards he proceeded to England.

"In this country, occupied in teaching Italian, and holding the Professorship at King's College, he engaged deeply in studies of the letter and spirit of Dante's imperishable works. The first-fruits of his labours appeared in the 'Analytic Comment' on Dante, of which the opening part only, the *Hell*, published in 1826 and 1827, has yet seen the light.

Rossetti's leading idea (indicated in this work, and enforced in subsequent productions with the fervour of a discoverer, vast literary diligence, and indefatigable minuteness of criticism) is that Dante, in common with numberless other great authors, wrote in a language of secret allegory, which embodies, in the form now of love, now of mythology, now of alchemy, now of freemasonry, the most daring doctrines in metaphysics and politics. In 1832 was published his work 'On the Anti-Papal Spirit which produced the Reformation, and on the secret influence which it exercised over the Literature of Europe, and especially of Italy, as is proved by many of her Classics, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, in particular,' (*Sullo Spirito Antipapale*, etc.), a treatise which was translated into English; in 1840, 'The Mystery of the Platonic Love of the Middle Ages, derived from the Ancient Mysteries,' (*Il Mistero dell' Amor Platonico*, etc.), in five volumes; and in 1842, 'A Critical Essay on Dante's Beatrice' (*La Beatrice di Dante*), the concluding parts of which remain in manuscript, but have recently, we understand, been worked up into a Frenchified concoction, issued, or to be issued, under the flaring title, *Dante Hérétique, Républicain, et Socialiste.* Rossetti's criticisms have been much criticized. Fraticelli and Schlegel have been his unmitigated opponents: Delécluze, in his *Amour du Dante*, and the German philosopher Mendelssohn, promulgated, without entirely committing themselves to, his views; an Italian writer of credit, Vecchioni, has taken them up in labours of his own; and Arthur Hallam, immortalized by Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, has left a respectful though adverse essay on the subject. In addition to these works, and others of minor account, four poetical volumes attest both the constancy and the versatility of Rossetti's powers,

—*Il Tempo*, *Salterio*, *Il Veggente in Solitudine*, *Versi*, and *L'Arpa Evangelica*; the last published not many months ago. Italy is not unmindful of his name.

"In private life Rossetti was thoroughly domestic and warm-hearted. His family and literature formed his world, whence the talents for society of which he possessed an ample share could not withdraw him. No political exile leaves a memory more highly above the whisper of public or private shame."

Rossetti lies buried in Highgate Cemetery, with the following inscription: "To the dear memory of my husband, Gabriele Rossetti; born at Vasto d' Ammone in the Kingdom of Naples, 28th February 1783; died in London, 26th April 1854. "He shall return no more nor see his native country."—Jer. xxii. 10. "Now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly."—Heb. xi. 16. "Ah Dio ajutami Tu."

The concluding phrase formed the last emphatic words which Rossetti pronounced in a loud voice, in the evening of 25th April, after some hours of approximate loss of speech. The remains of my mother, my brother's wife, and my sister Christina, are now interred in the same grave. Towards 1871 a proposal was pressed upon us for transporting my father's remains to Italy, for ceremonial re-interment there; but the feeling of most members of the family was adverse, and the project was not carried out.

The tone of the versified Autobiography—which is a very genuine document of his character and feelings—shows pretty well what manner of man Gabriele Rossetti was; and in my Memoir of Dante Rossetti I have given some details as to family-life and personal habits. Here, therefore, I shall barely touch the fringe of the subject. It is not for me to spy out every infirmity in my father's character; and, even were I to try to do so, I should find nothing worse to allege than a phase of self-esteem which at times trenched upon self-complacency, a disregard of externals in point of dress, etc., and an honourable (and, in the circumstances which affected himself in England and his family, a truly very requisite) habit of thriftiness which made him count the cost of every personal indulgence, while nothing expedient was stinted to his wife and children. I know him to have been diligent, indefatigable, upright, high-minded, affectionate, grateful, placable, eminently good-natured, vivacious, cheerful for the most part, friendly, companionable: whether patriotic I need not say. Our excellent friend Dr Adolf Heimann (Professor of German in University College), writing to my brother a letter of condolence on our father's death, made the following observations, which I consider just:—"I have never seen a more

FRANCES, MARIA, AND CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

From a Photograph

C. 1855

devoted man of letters; endowed with some of the rarest gifts of a literary character, real love for literature, unworldliness, perseverance, and warmth of interest both in writing and reading at an advanced time of life. He might indeed have been a model to all of us. When I look at all the great scholars and men of science whom I have known, I do not remember one who was so little satisfied with show as your father, who was so content with a comparatively humble situation, and so wonderfully patient in times of affliction."

In person Gabriele Rossetti was barely up to middle height, fleshy and full in contour until his health failed. His eyes were dark and expressive, and did not alter when his sight was damaged; his brow fine and well-rounded; his nose, though not specially large, more than commonly prominent, with wide nostrils. His mouth was pleasant and nicely moulded, with a winning smile, and on occasion a laugh of the heartiest.

APPENDIX

I HAVE now said as much as I feel to be requisite by way of explaining and supplementing my father's versified Autobiography, and shall proceed to give some further illustrative matter in the form of five Appendices.

1. Extracts from six of the domestic letters of Gabriele Rossetti.
2. Extracts from eight of those which he addressed to Mr Charles Lyell on the subject of his Dantesque and other literary researches.
3. Extracts from three letters of the Barone Kirkup regarding Dante, etc.
4. Twelve letters from Mazzini—all but one addressed to Rossetti.
5. Six specimens of Rossetti's poetry.

Under each of these five headings I add a few explanatory remarks.

No. 1.—From Six Letters from Gabriele Rossetti to his Wife

I give these letters (translated by me) for what they are worth; not as being of any singular degree of interest in

the topics which they raise, or in the mode of treating these, but chiefly for the purpose of showing what was the prevalent and constant tone of Rossetti in his family-relations. Two of his children, Dante Gabriel and Christina Georgina, have turned out to be of some moment to the British public, and some hint of their childish or youthful doings will be here found. In these letters I leave some gaps: in the great majority of cases this is only done because the omitted passages are of no importance. Holmer Green, the locality to which the first five letters are addressed, is in Buckinghamshire, near Little Missenden and Amersham: Gaetano Polidori, my maternal grandfather, along with his family, resided there for several years. The final letter was addressed to Mrs Rossetti at Brighton.

A.

[Mr Potter, here mentioned, was Mr Cipriani Potter, Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, a distinguished pianist, and composer of pianoforte-music. He was my godfather, and his family was the only British family of which our household saw a goodish deal in these early years. I infer that "the drama" which my father had written, and which was to be paid for with £40, was a set of scenes named *Medora e Corrado* (after Byron's *Corsair*),—Mr Potter having been concerned in composing music to these scenes: such a sum as £40 appears to be ample remuneration for it. "Mrs Fitch" was our servant at this date: I have naturally no recollection of Dante Gabriel's performance which amused her, nor yet of Signor Barile. Henry and Charlotte, named along with Barile, were my Uncle and Aunt: also Robert and Eliza.]

[38 Charlotte Street, London.]
4th May 1831.

My dearest Frances,

No doubt you have been indignant at my long silence, full fourteen days. Don't attribute it to want of love, but to my wish to write you something which might partly relieve the anxiety which you only too much share with me. Know therefore, dear wife, that our affairs are proceeding less amiss. At the present date I have seventeen lessons a week, and I am expecting others. . . . Mr Potter, who sends his best regards, saw me this morning, and he told me that Mrs Howard also will soon resume her lessons; and he expressly added, of his own accord, that it seems to be time for him to give me the £40 for the drama. I hope to put you, on your return, in possession of some £80 at home; and perhaps we shall be getting as much at the end of the season. Be in good spirits then, Frances mine, because that God who gives nourishment to worms in the earth will not abandon us, with our four little children, innocent and in need.

I have not slackened in trying for King's College, and many persons have interested themselves in my behalf. The Principe di Cimitile, who recommended me to some member of the Council of the College, learned from him that the election of Professors depends chiefly on the Bishop of London; and I quickly procured two letters of introduction to the Bishop. Mr Barclay, who is his intimate friend, gave me one, and the other came from Sir Gore Ouseley, who has also handed me two others for two patrons of the College. I trust that Providence will second my efforts.

The affairs of Italy also resume a better aspect; and it is officially notified that the French Government has sent a representative to Rome, to dissuade from shedding the blood

of the poor patriots, who have behaved with admirable moderation. Poland is darting like a thunderbolt against Russia.

Two or three days after your departure I received another letter from Mr Lyell, in which he asks me briefly to suspend sending him the MS. you wot of, as he was about to start for a different part of England; adding that by the end of a month he would come in person to see us in London. I fancy that he has gone to present himself as a candidate for the new Parliament. People are all in motion for this purpose; but it seems that Reform will triumph, and the anti-reformers will get more and more into the mire. God forbid that this Bill should not pass—there would certainly be a revolution. All say so, and the symptoms are manifest. . . .

I trust that you and our children have always been well: speak of them to me one by one when you write. I was so much pleased at what you told me about Gabriel in your last; and it made Mrs Fitch laugh so that she recounted it to all who came here—Henry, Charlotte, and also Signor Barile. . . . Salute cordially for me Robert and Eliza: God give them patience with those four babbykins, and especially with that dear impertinent, Gabriel. In your last you told me nothing about either William or Christina: make up for your omission. Every syllable you write about them is a boon to me. . . .

Your loving

GABRIELE.

B.

[Mr Tallent, here mentioned, was the medical adviser of the family at Holmer Green; Mr MacIntyre (living near Portland Place) was often consulted towards this time in

London. About Maestro Negri and the drama I have no clear idea: possibly it was *Il Corsaro*, for Rossetti wrote some "Scene Melodrammatiche" under this title, as well as the "Cantata Melodrammatica" of *Medora e Corrado*. The person termed "Mr Charles" was the painter Mr (afterwards Sir) Charles Locke Eastlake: "my new work," which he admired, was the *Spirito Antipapale*.]

[38 Charlotte Street, London.]
15*th May* 1832.

My dearest Frances,

. . . I should indeed like to see our skittish Christina, with those rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes, so like her grandmother's, walking all alone about the garden, like a little butterfly among the flowers. I hope that, thanks to the beneficial change of air, I shall soon see her still prettier and still healthier than you describe her to me now. To tell you the truth, I think Mr Tallent's advice is better than Mr MacIntyre's. It is high time to wean her. . . . You cannot think how much pleasure those childish English words which you gathered from the lips of Maria and Gabriel gave me. If they are truthful, I thank Heaven that they are good children, and that they do not tire your mother too much with their noise and their impudence. I mean to send them some new little picture-books which will amuse them; and also a box of figs, in order that you may at times reward their good behaviour and satisfy their small greed. Poor little things! They used to await my return home so eagerly, so as to receive the trifles I had brought them! And now neither they nor I have that pleasure. . . .

This evening Casella arrived here quite out of breath to announce that the King has again dismissed the Duke of

Wellington from the ministry, and has recalled Lord Grey with all his ministerial following; thus rectifying the error he had committed. And indeed he could not act otherwise in order to calm the huge agitation which was on foot throughout the country, and principally in this metropolis. The Duke of Wellington has had the mortification of being unable to find any one who would consent to form the Cabinet with him; Sir Robert Peel refused, Lord Aberdeen refused; all refused when they perceived the peril in which they would place themselves. A pretty figure they have cut—the great Captain and His Majesty,—this latter so changeable and deceitful, and the former first deserted and then sent about his business! It is a hard task to oppose the will of a whole people. It is just 11 o'clock as I write to you, and I hear "*The Courier*, fourth edition," being called out by several voices past the house. . . .

Let us take heart, Providence will not forsake us. You know, my wife, that we have had recent proofs of its assistance; here is another. Yesterday the son of the Maestro Negri called on me bringing me the answer from those young ladies who, as you know, wished for a drama; he showed me a letter from them in which the matter is revived. I have had to lower my price, however, and content myself with thirty guineas. . . .

Two days ago, a great Italian littérateur, Professor Orioli, head of the Bologna University, and head of the Italian Government during last year's revolution, visited me, and paid me a great compliment on my new work. Mr Scrope, with whom I dined last Saturday, also said some very laudatory things about it, which he based on the opinion of *Mr Charles*, who had read it; the latter afterwards expressed his admiration to me in person. Last week I wrote two

long letters to Malta to thank Mr and Miss Frere for their very opportune generosity, which saved us from imminent anxieties.

The day before yesterday I bought myself a pair of spectacles, which I felt badly in need of; and now, if you could see what an imposing figure I cut, and what a grave air they give me, it would inspire even you with respect. When you return you will certainly take me for a president. I will not tell you how much they cost, because you would immediately conclude that my spectacles were bad, and yet they serve their purpose wonderfully well. . . .

Hitherto my stupid prophecy has not been at all fulfilled, and this letter is witness to the fact: and I pray to God that he may not fulfil it till I have been able, with your help, to educate and give a start in life to our four dear offshoots, who have rendered life extremely dear to me; and I hope to pass it in your sweet company, in that reciprocal affection which has hitherto bound us together. . . .

Your most affectionate husband,

GABRIELE.

C.

[The "garden" here spoken of is the enclosure of Park Square, Regent's Park; I can remember being in it more than once in early childhood. Sangiovanni, a strange impetuous southern Italian, was now an artist-modeller in clay. Dr Maroncelli was a brother of the prisoner who was sent to the Spielberg along with Silvio Pellico, as recorded in Pellico's book, once highly celebrated, *Le Mie Prigioni*. "My letter for the King of Naples" appears to have been a memorial or petition. Pistrucci (Filippo) had been run down in London

streets, and remained lame (yet still active) up to the close of his life, which terminated towards 1857.]

[38 Charlotte Street, London.]
29th May 1832.

My dearly loved Frances,

I would that I had not received your letter this time, although I had looked forward to it and desired it so eagerly. Every word you wrote pierced like a dagger into my heart. My sweetest Gabriel, then, is so ill! My baby Christina suffers with her teeth and has wounded her forehead! Oh my poor children! If the distance were less great, I would come immediately to see my four treasures, and you, my beloved wife, who must be immensely afflicted, as I am myself. And William, you tell me nothing about him. You told me in your last letter that he had a return of those fevers from which he suffered here: and now, how is that going on?—how is he? As you do not speak about it, I will hope and trust that he has recovered. Be good enough, dear Frances, to write to me at once and tell me all about them; hide from me nothing, absolutely nothing. I wish to know the facts, be they better or be they worse. . . . I beg you, I beg you urgently, to return immediately if Gabriel's condition permits. I wish to share with you the care of my bantlings. I would never have written you this but for this painful circumstance, but would have been content to remain a cheerless hermit for another month; but, now that I see that your presence instead of improving only aggravates the condition of your honoured mother to whom we owe every consideration, now that I see that our children, instead of benefiting by the country air, have rather derived harm from it (although I ought perhaps to

attribute this to other causes), I should feel dreadfully anxious if you remained any longer away from me. Who knows but what the figs I sent may have done them harm! But this constant change of weather has more likely been the cause, first hot, then cold, now hot again. This belief is strengthened by your telling me that Maria and Christina have sore throats. . . . I should be the most frantic and inconsolable man in the world if I were to lose a son, that dearest little Gabriel, the very core of my heart, and lose him thus, far from my sight. My eyes are already full of tears whilst writing these words, and unless I dry them I cannot continue writing, as I do not see the paper. But take heart, my wife, it may turn out to be nothing serious.

Here, meanwhile, is one cause for rejoicing. I have already obtained the key of the garden for which you so often wished. . . . I have already been five times for a stroll in the garden, the first time alone, the second time with Polidori, the third with him and Sangiovanni, the fourth again with him and Doctor Maroncelli, one of those two who called on me one evening in company with Lablache. This walk is very convenient, and the children will find plenty of space to walk and run about here and there. . . .

I have already written three scenes of that play for the young ladies, which I have given to the son of Maestro Negri. . . .

Count Lucchesi has told me a thing which he had never mentioned to me before. When he went with my letter to the King of Naples, about which you heard, he found the Minister of Naples reading my last work, dedicated to Mr Lyell. The Minister said to him: "What a talented man this Rossetti is! You see what persons the government of Naples exiles!" It is well, dear Frances, that this diplomatist should not

be ignorant of what I have written; and, if it is granted me to return to my country, before doing so I will send the work to the King of Naples, so that he will not be able to say later on that I had committed some old faults of which he was unaware. On Friday I dined with that painter whom I described to you by the name of Mr Charles. . . .

I will close this letter begging you again to write to me at once, during the course of this week. Remember that until I hear from you again I shall be extremely agitated. Don't conceal anything from me, I repeat. If you did so, you would force me to rush off to you like a madman, to ascertain with my own eyes the real state of things. Besides which it might cause me a somewhat serious ill; since for some six days I have felt distressing and strong symptoms of gout, which causes me much uneasiness. I needn't ask you to look after the children, because I hold it unnecessary; I know you too well. I doubt whether there lives a better mother than you, and a wife more amiable and affectionate has yet to be born. And so your husband idolizes you, and his sincerest love increases with years, and he considers himself fortunate in possessing such a rare woman.

Good-bye, dearly loved Frances, I am going to bed for it is one o'clock. I bless one by one the infant pledges of our love, and invoke on them health and prosperity. Kiss them for me, speak about me to them, and—along with theirs—preserve your precious health, which is my greatest treasure.

Yesterday poor Pistrucci wrote me a letter which really is fit to make one weep. He says he is suffering horrible torments, and it has been discovered that his thigh was broken in three parts, so that he is crippled. Poor man!

Your most affectionate husband,

GABRIELE ROSSETTI.

D.

[I have no recollection of the Marchesa Marchigiana, nor of Signor Ferri. The physiognomical estimate of Signor Janer is curious, because that gentleman, a cultivated Tuscan whom we saw continually in these years, was regarded as somewhat prone to backbiting; he was always, however, on good terms with my father and his family, and I should say that he was really amicable with all of us. Margaret, named towards the end of the letter, was my mother's elder sister.]

50 Charlotte Street [London].
6th September 1836.

My dearest Frances,

. . . At the moment of my writing a very deluge is coming down—lightning, thunder, buckets of water. I am sorry for poor Gabriel, who is out for a walk with Henry. . . .

That Marchesa Marchigiana left yesterday morning (Sunday), and in the last two days she called on me thrice. On the evening of Saturday she came at eight, and left at midnight. She talked for ten. She expressed great concern for your illness, and exclaimed several times—"Oh, if I had seen her, I would have made her know what a husband she possesses!" To hear her, I am the idol of Italy. She knows by heart a great quantity of my verses, some of which I had as good as forgotten. Suffice it to say that she knows more of them than Curci, and is more enthusiastic than Curci about me and my doings. But the greatest wonder is that she recites long snatches of my *Analytic Comment on the Divina Commedia*. She told me that, being unable to procure it in print (as it

is prohibited in Italy), she copied it all out from one that was lent her in secret. That many other people have done the like. That of my *Salterio* (the *whole* of which she truly knows by heart) she is acquainted with a great number of manuscript copies. That in Rome a liberal Monsignore named Muzzarelli has, like herself, copied it out, and learned it off. That, were I to return, in passing through Romagna, youthful admirers would come about me in shoals, and would unharness the horses from my carriage to drag me in triumph. Matter for laughter! Sangiovanni, who was present at all this (which I can but suppose exaggerated), had to wipe his eyes from time to time—the loving friend. In short, dear Frances, without your having observed it nor yet myself, you have as husband the greatest man of Italy, indeed the idol of Italy! Who would ever have fancied it?

The best of it is that another gentleman from Lugo has arrived, Conte Carducci, who brings me a letter from Comendator Borgia (a descendant of that scoundrel Alexander VI.), and both Carducci and Borgia speak to me in the same style. . . . This shows once again that the physical optics are the reverse of the imaginary; for, as by physics distant objects seem to us small, so by imagination small objects, the further off they are, seem the larger. I should be almost afraid of returning, even if I could, so that I might not verify that saying, *Minuit præsentia famam.*

The Marchesa gave us a proof of her physiognomic science which made me and Sangiovanni laugh a great deal. She saw here Janer, whom she knew not in the least, and who showed her a thousand civilities. After Janer had left, she, who had treated him distantly, called me aside, and said: "Beware of that man, who has the face of a great intriguer and a very cunning fellow." Isn't this queer? . . .

With her came a very handsome young man from Fermo, named Ferri, nephew of Cardinal Ferri. He, on hearing the nature of your illness, spoke of one of his of the same class, from which he has recovered to the most perfect health. He was reduced, as he described it, to a truly deplorable condition, from which he rallied by continual exercise; and if one sees him now!

"Di due rivali i pregi in sè compone—
Marte alla forza, alla bellezza Adone—" *

(old verses of mine). So, my dear Frances, take as much exercise as you can. . . .

Lo and behold, the day is again beautiful, and what a brilliant sun! Truly the climate of London is more changeable than a Frenchwoman. Gabriel is knocking with that double knock of his like the postman. I trust he avoided the rain under some shelter—will go and ask. He has returned all drenched, and Margaret will make him change clothes. . . .

I embrace you, and bless Maria. Repeat to her that her letter gave me great pleasure; and tell her that I expect one in Italian, which will serve not only to show me how you are, when you don't want to be writing yourself, but also to keep her in the practice of the language of "the beautiful land." Believe me, full of unalterable affection,

Your Husband,

GABRIELE.

* "He unites the advantages of two rivals—Mars in strength, Adonis in beauty."

E.

[50 Charlotte Street, London.
21st October 1836.]

My dearest Frances,

Ever since you informed us that the day of your longed-for return would be the 25th of this October (which will complete two full months of your absence) we have never ceased to count, every day, how many days remain before reaching the one which is to restore you to us. The most steady computer of this sum is Christina. This morning, barely just out of bed, she came in great glee into the room where I was studying, and the first words she spoke were these—"Not counting to-day, only three days remain" (you will understand that the day of my writing is Friday evening). And I'm sure that to-morrow morning she will come and say, "There are only two remaining." . . . If you will tell us at about what hour you will arrive at the Coach-office, we will all come to meet you, and will bring you home in triumph, outbidding the most pompous ovations of ancient Rome. . . . Oh that I had two arms as long as from here to Holmer Green! you would find your neck clasped of a sudden by the warmest marital embrace, and you would then be softly seized hold of and deposited in Charlotte Street, saving you the trouble of the journey by the road: yours should be aërial, to beat those of Mrs Graham and Mr Green. . . . The true, the one treasure of my life is my dear Frances, and to restore her to me renewed in health is to restore my existence. Goodbye to the better portion of myself. Three days hence you, by God's

help, will be here with me, and I will prove to you how much you are loved by

Your Husband,

GABRIELE.

F.

[Dante Gabriel had been commissioned by his godfather, Mr Lyell, to paint an oil-portrait of our father; he was now, after some seeming neglectfulness, giving full attention to the matter. The portrait, nearly his first painting, turned out a creditable work; it remains in the Lyell family, the property of Sir Leonard Lyell, and is reproduced in this volume.]

[50 CHARLOTTE STREET, LONDON.]
21st August 1848.

MY DEAREST FRANCES,

I have the satisfaction of informing you that this (Monday) morning our Gabriel has for an hour and a half been working at my portrait in colours, which appears to me to come very like, if I can trust my poor eyesight, and the exclamations of our emphatic Maria. Moreover, I asked Gabriel whether he would go on to-morrow, and he replied yes. If he takes a fancy to it, he will not leave off until he has finished the work; you know that character of his better than myself. I am fain to hope that all I wrote you in my recent letter was only the outcome of the over-much anxiety of a father who gets distressed at any appearance of evil in what concerns a beloved son. . . .

I had hoped yesterday to see Pistrucci, whom I supposed likely to come to London, to promote the concert for the benefit of the Italian School. But I was disappointed. I

DANTE GABRIEL AND WILLIAM ROSSETTI

From a Water-Colour Sketch by Filippo Pistrucci

C. 1838

trust he was not offended at that outburst I sent him regarding the demagogues who have contributed to the present ruin of Italy. He, as the perfectly sincere patriot whom all men recognize, must deplore, or rather detest, whatever can have been a cause of the pitiful state to which our country is reduced. But let us hope that the disaster is reparable, and I am certain that his heart desires this no less fervently than my own. I am aware of the glorious event at Bologna, where the Germans got a good lesson. May this be the glorious beginning of a still more glorious re-arising! I know that France and England have become mediators between Italy and Austria in this bloody strife; may they be sincere and effectual mediators for the good of both, and may the *reasonable liberty* of our poor country result from their efforts! Not every evil comes to do harm—an old adage: let us hope this may be so in our case. Perhaps the republican over-zeal will be toned down, after the events which we are deploring. . . .

Now that I can give you better news from home, I remain with a more cheerful heart

Your loving Husband,

G. Rossetti.

No. 2.—From Eight Letters from Gabriele Rossetti to Charles Lyell, Kinnordy

[As to Mr Lyell, see p. 72. I give the following extracts, bearing upon Rossetti's theories and speculations regarding Dante and a great number of other writers, not because I suppose him to have been constantly right in detail, nor even as adopting his views in a broad sense, but because the

allegations which he here puts forward are certainly both curious and startling; and they formed so intimate a portion of his thought and life, chiefly between the years 1825 and 1842, that no true picture of him could be given without taking matters of this kind into account. The correspondence between Mr Lyell and my father was frequent, and often lengthy. I used to possess the general bulk of the letters written by Mr Lyell, and had been authorized by the present head of the family, Sir Leonard Lyell, to use, in a compilation which I was undertaking, extracts from many of them. In 1898, however, an interchange took place between Sir Leonard and myself; and I now own the letters which my father wrote, in lieu of letters coming from Mr Lyell. In comparison with the full extent of these Rossetti epistles, the extracts which I give are a mere trifle. I have selected not always the most important passages, but such as tend to show the very wide range along which he applied his theory of a covert, esoteric, and perilous meaning in the writings of authors of many centuries and many nations. Copies of Rossetti's letters to Lyell, one hundred and twenty-eight in number, are deposited in the Taylor Institution, Oxford; the copying was done by Signor de Tivoli.

There is another copious correspondence which my father carried on regarding the like topics—that with Mr Hookham Frere. I possess the letters of Mr Frere appertaining to this correspondence, and also (through the courtesy of Mr John Tudor Frere and Miss Festing) those of Rossetti. I had at one time thought of publishing ample extracts from this series; but ultimately I found it more suitable to place the correspondence at the disposal of Miss Festing, who, in her interesting book named *John Hookham Frere and his Friends* (1899), has drawn upon it so far as was consistent

with her scheme. She has also quoted the passage in verse about Hookham Frere (see p. 60 of the present work). Miss Festing naturally did not publish all the letters *in extenso*, nor even so much of them as I had at first proposed to extract. Several passages which Miss Festing did not use seem well worthy of being printed at some time or another—Mr Hookham Frere's letters, not to speak of my father's, being capital reading; at present, however, I leave all this aside, chiefly with a view to condensing my whole account of Gabriele Rossetti into a moderate space.]

A.

29th October 1831.

My very dear Sir,

. . . I have by me *decisive* historical records and documents, researches into works in the sect-language,* treatises on the use of the sect-language; in fine, I have as much as would make all our adversaries remain frost-bound and mute. And to me it is a kind of enigma to see how matters so multiple, so consentaneous, so palpable, which have been going on in a lapse of six centuries (from Frederick II. up to our time), have not ever been either discerned or revealed. There is not the least doubt that that Emperor projected a change of religion, and the destruction of the Roman Church. The Popes had no alternative but either to destroy him and his party, or else to be themselves destroyed, and their cult with them. That opinion of Foscolo, regarded by all as a fantasy, which led him to say that *Dante*

* *Gergo.* The word might be translated as "slang" or "jargon"; but each of these words conveys a rather incongruous idea to an English mind, so I say (here and elsewhere) "the sect-language."

wished to change the religion, is a certain fact; and his fantasy consists only in his having supposed that this was an idea of Dante's own, and not that of a most numerous, most potent, and most wide-spread sect, upheld by men of great power. . . .

Never will I set it down, *never*, that there was a project of expelling Jesus Christ from the altars — only that there was a project for restoring His worship to its primitive simplicity, and that they profaned the Catholic doctrine by a concerted phraseology which involved a political scheme. Wherefore scandalize the world by the revelation of a daring purpose which may do discredit to illustrious authors, and bring down upon myself the ill-will of the sect which still exists, and has power and influence in the social world? The fact is that the true intention of that secret society, to which belonged all the authors whom I am engaged in examining, manifested itself plainly in the effects of the French Revolution at the close of last century. . . .

Reghellini says openly that Dante's poem is a Masonic poem; and, before he wrote this, I had already seen it for myself. . . .

I have also made some examination of English poetry— that of the time of Cromwell; I know, however, and know for certain, that Chaucer is in the same boat. . . .

Your highly obliged

GABRIELE ROSSETTI.

B.

1st October 1832.

MY VERY DEAR SIR,

. . . It is impossible to continue without exhibiting the most intimate mysteries of the sect, seeing

that the entire poem of Dante, all the lyrics of Petrarca, almost all the works of Boccaccio, and, in fine, all the old writings of that class, are nothing else than *downright doctrine and practice of the Freemasons*, in the strictest acceptation of the word. Such was the Gay Science, such the Platonic love, such the sect of the Templars, and that of the Paulicians. How true this is you will find in the published volume,* with numberless manuscript additions which I have made to it. . . . There you will see developed the God of the Sect—viz. Man in Freedom; there, also, the Sectarian Trinity, the Incarnation, Transubstantiation, and other matters. . . . But it is dangerous to consign the work to the public, and the chief danger is this: The demonstration cannot be *rightly* founded, so as to defy confutation, without citing in confirmation the writings of St Paul and those of St John. One might make use of protests, dexterity, or even hypocrisy, but none the less one must state the thing which is; and, if one will not state this, one is compelled to stop short at the effects, and leave the cause unexplained, which makes less visible and tangible the reality of the assumption. . . .

I see with regret that the assertion of many Sectarian writers, and among others of Swedenborg, is not without foundation —namely, that the religion founded upon the New Testament is, in fact, the religion which they profess, of which *we* practise the letter, and *they* possess the spirit: we are the outer church, and they form the hereditary priesthood. Be this true or false, great indeed is the illusion which it assails;† and to bring

* Rossetti's volume *Lo Spirito Antipapale che produsse la Riforma.*

† "L'illusione è sì grande che scuote." I understand the meaning to be as here rendered; but the phrase is not entirely clear.

this to light would be an offence against the human society in which we exist. . . .

I now comprehend why the *Mysterium Magnum* was never manifested to the world. It is confided to very few persons, of well-approved prudence, and at an age of thorough maturity; and to discover it by one's own scrutiny is a work of immense labour, and (I will venture to say) of no ordinary talent. . . . I know that Mr Frere belongs to the secret order; and, having perceived what it is that I have already discovered by analysis and reasoning, he fears lest I should reveal it to the world. I am not so mad as to plan detriment to society, and to myself. . . .

With regard to the chapter, *Dante personified in Adam*, this, though not demonstrated in full, has none the less a great basis of proofs in other chapters; and its substance is that Dante was the inventor of that simulated religious language. Perhaps, on reading some additions which I have made, you will more strongly feel the reality of the thesis. . . .

Your much obliged Servant,

GABRIELE ROSSETTI.

C.

15*th May* 1833.

MY VERY DEAR SIR,

"Non io, se cento bocche avessi e cento
Lingue, con ferrea lena e ferreo petto," *

not if I were to talk for a hundred years with the eloquence of Cicero himself, could I sufficiently thank you for having first mentioned and then sent to me the *Donna Immaginaria*

* Not I, if I had a hundred mouths and a hundred tongues, with iron lungs and iron breast."

of Magalotti. Oh what a precious book for proving to the over-brim my assumption! . . .

In these recent days I have made some most important discoveries in the *Convito*: of these I will give you a hint, but only a hint, as the thing would be lengthy to expound. Being persuaded that the *Convito* is the exposition, in the sect-language, of the *Commedia* and its secrets, I, observing that Dante dwells so much upon explaining the cosmographical construction of heaven and earth, and confident that he must be speaking of his poem, have been minded to follow the track which he indicates; and I have found (*mirabile dictu!*) that all corresponds to the poem. Begin reading at p. 153 (Zatta's edition), here at the end; "This heaven turns round this centre continually," etc.; all that he says—verily all—expounds the arcane structure of his poetic machinery, and discloses its secret device. . . .

Your much obliged

G. Rossetti.

D.

13th January 1836.

Very dear Sir and Excellent Friend,

. . . The interpretation of the *Vita Nuova* depends upon knowing what portions of it are to be taken first, and what portions are to be taken last. This enigmatic booklet contains thirty-three compositions (*vide* your Index), relating to the thirty-three cantos of each section of the *Commedia*. These thirty-three poetic compositions are to be divided into three parts, according to those three sections, and to the three predominant canzoni of the *Vita Nuova*. The central canzone, which is "Donna pietosa," is the head

of the skein, and from that point must the interpretation begin; and then one must take, on this side and on that, the four lateral sonnets to the left, and the four to the right—(the last one to the right has been somewhat altered by Dante, with the designation of one stanza of an incomplete canzone, but it is in fact a sonnet, as I will prove)—and the one set of sonnets will explain the other set; and it will be seen that the death of Beatrice's father, set forth on the left side, and the death of Beatrice herself, set forth on the right side, of the central canzone, mean one and the same thing. This is the first part of the enigma.

On this side and on that follow the two canzoni, placed symmetrically—viz. "Donne che avete intelletto d'amore" on the left, and "Gli occhi dolenti per pietà del core" on the right. In the former it is decided that Beatrice is to die; in the second, Beatrice dead is lamented; and the one canzone explains the other. And thus, proceeding from one side to the other, collating the ten compositions to the right with the ten to the left, we come finally to the first and the last sonnets of the *Vita Nuova*, which contain two visions; and the last vision, "Oltre la spera che più larga gira," explains the first vision, "A ciascun' alma presa e gentil core." When the interpretation goes on these lines, this sonnet becomes as clear as possible. Dante, assuming his reader to be already cognizant of the mystical language, and to be capable of solving by this process his work which has the character of a knot, wrote: "The true judgment as to the said sonnet was not then seen by any one, but now it is manifest to the simplest." . . . The central part [of the *Vita Nuova*], which constitutes the Beatrice Nine,* consists

* This odd-seeming phrase offers no difficulty to the reader of the *Vita Nuova*. Dante there says that Beatrice had a special analogy with

of nine compositions — *i.e.* the central canzone, with four sonnets on one side and four on the other. . . .

Recently I have been applying myself to a study of the first Holy Fathers of the primitive Church; and they say plainly that they, in the inner Sacerdotal School, explained the *mysteries* of religion, protesting at the same time that they could reveal nothing of this to the profane. I have passages from St Basil, a light of the Greek Church, which show that these personages acted like the gentile schools. . . .

Your truly devoted and obliged

G. Rossetti.

E.

14th January 1836.

Very dear Sir and Friend,

. . . The object or system of the secret school, in explaining the mysteries, is to show that those whom we take for beings existing outside of ourselves, and who are represented to us as such by the Christian doctrine, are none other than our internal ideas or affections; that is to say, that those supernatural personages who are exhibited to men as divine are the human faculties themselves, personified by ancient secret art; and that these figurative personages merge the one into the other, and interpenetrate and unify in one sole being—namely, in Man. The ultimate revelation.

This is equally the system of Dante, both in the *Divine Comedy* and in the *Vita Nuova*—which latter gives the keys of the former. . . .

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the number nine, and was (in a sense) a nine, or a three times three, whereof the root was the Holy Trinity.

Origen and Tertullian, as well as Synesius, Bishop of Cyrene, give in the sect-language the keys to the whole New Testament, and partly to the Old: . . . the self-same explanation which is given in the mysteries of the present still-subsisting sect.

From the writings of the latter I gather that the secret school of the Christian priesthood is continued by Masonry; that one of the heads of the school in Constantine's time, Sylvester, came to an understanding with that despot to suppress the secret explanation, and to retain merely the formula of the external figures, which understanding produced the papacy or priesthood of Rome; but that other chiefs of the same school, indignant at his having sold the interests of mankind to the secular power, severed themselves from him and persisted in the secret teaching,—which went on to the late ages (and here we arrive at Dante), and so continued up to our own times.

F.

16th December 1836.

My very dear Sir,

I cannot sufficiently express to you how much pleasure it affords me to hear from you, "What you have written* has convinced me." . . .

Despite every effort, the nature of the argument wells forth of itself, and almost overflows the dykes which I labour to erect and strengthen. And I regret to tell you (far from

* Rossetti's letter, next before the present one, is dated 13th December 1836. It would seem (looking to dates) that Mr Lyell's acknowledgment of being convinced cannot have applied to anything contained in that letter, but to something in the proofs, then passing through his hands, of the *Mistero dell' Amor Platonico*.

rejoicing at it) that in the successive chapters the evidence increases to such a point as to belie all my words, which heal, assuage, and soften down the nature of the thing. Oh how much have I done to disguise it, but all in vain! I confess to you my misdeed: in that which you have read, or which you will be reading, I have suppressed all those passages of the authorities that I quote which exhibit the secret overtly. I have quoted in a maimed form Petrarca, Boccaccio, and especially Swedenborg. . . . For example, this Swede writes that the entire Bible, both the Old Testament and the New, is written in that self-same language in which he writes, and that his is none other than a prolongation of that. He says that the Prophets saw God no otherwise than he saw him; that there is no other future life than that which he describes, in which one dies a man, and revives as an angel to a new life; that there are not any other heavens nor another God than those to which he ascended, and that with whom he spoke; and other similar things: all of them expunged by me, even in the thick of the citation which I make. These utterances of his may have illuded the world, before it was understood, by giving the keys, what heaven is, and what the angels and God are; but, the keys having been given, the propositions become horrible and scandalous. . . .

Your very affectionate and obliged

G. Rossetti.

G.

21st July 1840.

My very dear Sir,

. . . I could send you a hundred things of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which I have amassed in my extracts. I will limit myself to two sonnets

of the famous Raphael of Urbino; and judge you whether he was not of the sect—like his contemporary, Michelangelo Buonarroti, and very many others who were in the environment of the Pope.

"Un pensier dolce è *rimembrare*, e godo." *

Raphael's second sonnet. He, having descended from the *third heaven* (like St Paul), writes thus:

"Come non potè dir d'arcana Dei
Paolo come disceso fù dal cielo,
Così il mio cor d'un amoroso velo
Ha ricoperto tutt' i pensier miei.
Però che quanto io vidi e quanto fei (in the third heaven)
Per gaudio taccio che nel petto celo;
E prima cangerò nel fronte il pelo
Che mai l'obbligo volger pensier rei." †

. . . Pico della Mirandola, Molza, and other contemporaries,

* *i.e.* "To remember is a sweet thought, and I rejoice." My father proceeds here to quote the entire sonnet, underlining some words, and offering brief comments. I question whether the English reader would thank me for reproducing the whole. As regards the other (second) sonnet which follows, I give the whole of the octave, with comments.

† Translation: "As Paul, when he had descended from heaven, could not speak of the arcana of God, so my heart has covered all my thoughts with an amorous veil. Wherefore, for joy which I hide in my heart, I keep silence as to all that I saw and all that I did; and I shall change the hair on my brow sooner than guilty thoughts shall ever reverse the obligation." I have translated the last line in conformity with the annotation made by my father, which runs thus: "'Che mai pensier rei volger possano in me l'obbligo' to keep silence, as he has said." I feel, however, some considerable doubt whether this is the true order of the words, which are, as a matter of mere construing, anything but clear. It might be possible to attempt some conjectural emendation in the words, but I forbear.

speak of this third heaven in the same mysterious manner, and agree with what St Bernard, Swedenborg, Cecco d'Ascoli, Dante, etc., say of it. . . .

Oh how much can be gathered from the Latin writings of Poliziano! Far more than even from those of Tasso. . . .

Your greatly obliged and obedient

G. Rossetti.

H.

1st February 1842.

My very dear Sir,

. . . Have you ever read *Le Livre Mystique* of De Balzac, a living French author—a book published in 1836? Read it, for it is truly curious. It is divided into three parts, and expounds mysticism in mystic language, somewhat less obscure than in the ancient works of like kind. In the first part he introduces a certain Louis Lambert as expounder of mysticism; in the second he introduces Dante at the school of Sigier in Paris, "al Vico degli Strami, Sillogizzando invidiosi veri": * in the third he introduces a nephew of Swedenborg, *female and male*, a fantastic and changeful being, Seraphita-Seraphitus; and she-and-he expresses herself in terms fit to set the soundest head in a whirl,—and says among other things: "L'union qui se fait d'un *esprit d'amour* et d'un *esprit de sagesse* met la créature à l'état *divin*, pendant que son âme est *femme* et que son corps est *homme*; dernière expression humaine où l'esprit l'emporte sur la forme, et la forme se débat encore contre l'esprit divin. . . . Ainsi *le naturel* (état dans lequel sont les êtres non régénérés), *le spirituel* (état dans lequel sont les esprits angéliques), et *le*

* These words come from Dante's *Paradiso*: "In Rue du Fouarre, syllogizing invidious truths."

divin (état dans lequel demeure l'ange avant de briser son enveloppe), sont *les trois degrés* de l'exister par lesquels l'homme parvient au ciel." (Vol. II. p. 102.) And so on to a large extent. What seems to me most noticeable is to see Dante and Swedenborg put on the same footing. And Reghellini says plainly that Dante was a Freemason (*vide* Vol. III. pp. 48, 49). And Ragon affirms the same (pp. 290-332). . . .

Your most attached

G. Rossetti.

No. 3.—From Three Letters from Seymour [Barone] Kirkup to Gabriele Rossetti

[Mr Seymour Kirkup, an English painter and man of letters established in Florence, became an enthusiastic adherent to Rossetti's scheme of Dantesque interpretation, from reading his Comment on the *Inferno* and his *Spirito Antipapale*. In his later years he was made a Barone of the Italian Kingdom, and he died at a great age towards 1880. The following extracts relate chiefly to the deeply interesting discovery, in which he bore a very principal part, of the portrait of Dante by Giotto in the Chapel of the Podestà, in the Bargello of Florence.]

A.

Florence, 12*th September* 1840.

My very excellent Friend,

Yours of the 22nd July came safe with the Sonnet, "O della mente eterna immago e prole." It is very

beautiful. It is capital. Let me thank you very sincerely, and let me congratulate you on Germany being about to enjoy the benefit of your invaluable discoveries. Every new country is a triumph of your cause; and, whilst all Europe will be benefiting by your genius and learning, Italy alone remains without an Italian edition of the original Italian work on the great luminary of Italy and of the world. In Florence there are too many obstacles: the priests, and the antiquated routine imbecility of the Crusca. The word-mongers are all envious. They are true bran, and well sifted from the fior di pensieri. They are old, and find your success a reproach, and in this country all hue and cry raised against innovation is supported by force. The tone of the court and the police is carried into the Academies. Well may you say "L' Italia invidia omai fin la Turchia."

I have delayed writing in the hopes of sending you a sketch which will interest you, but I have hitherto been disappointed. We have made a discovery of an original portrait of Dante in fresco by Giotto! Although I was a magna pars in this undertaking, the Jacks in Office have not allowed me yet to make a copy. Sono tanto gelosi, most likely afraid I should publish it and prevent some friends of their own reaping all the profit they hope from that speculation.

I was the person who first mentioned to Sig. Bezzi, a Piedmontese and friend of Carlo Eastlake's, the existence of the portrait under the whitewash of three centuries. We were joined by an American, and we three undertook at our expense to employ a restorer to uncover the walls of the old chapel in the palace of the Podestà in search of the portrait —mentioned by F. Villani, Filelfo, L. Aretino, Vasari, Cinelli, etc. Nothing but the constancy and talent of Sig. Bezzi could have overcome the numberless obstacles and refusals

we met with. He wrote and spoke with the persuasions of an advocate, and persevered with the obstinacy and activity of an Englishman (which I believe he now is). He alone was the cause of success. We should have had no chance without him. At last, after uncovering enough of three walls to ascertain it was not there, the Government took the task into their own hands, on our terms, with the same restorer, and in the fifth wall they have succeeded. The number of walls is six, for the chapel has been divided in two—(magazines of wine, oil, bread, etc., for the prisoners).

The precise date of the painting is not known. The poet looks about 28—very handsome—un Apollo colle fattezze di Dante. The expression and character are worthy of the subject, and much beyond what I expected from Giotto. Raphael might own it with honour. Add to which it is not the mask of a corpse of 56—a ruin—but a fine, noble image of the Hero of Campaldino, the Lover of Beatrice. The costume very interesting—no beard or even a lock of hair.

A white cap, over which a white capuccio, lined with dark red showing the edge turned back. A parchment book under his arm—perhaps the Vita Nuova.

It is in a group of many others — one seems Charles II. of Naples. Brunetto Latini and Corso Donati are mentioned by the old authors.

I send herewith a pamphlet by Prof. Nannucci — very curious and very interesting respecting Dante — and a dose for the Crusca.

I wrote to you by Mr Craufurd, who took charge of the medal, and sent two pamphlets by him, one for Mr Taylor —and two letters of thanks, one to him and one to Mr Lyell; but I fear by what you say in your last letter you have never received them. Mr C[raufurd] is a friend of Eastlake's, who

can perhaps get them for you. I liked Mr Taylor's book* very much indeed, and am very grateful to you and him.

Yours most sincerely,

SEYMOUR KIRKUP.

B.

FLORENCE, 14*th September* 1841.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

By the time you receive this, I hope that the portrait of Dante, for you, will be in London.

The gentleman who has taken charge of it was in such haste to leave the country (from the consequences of a fatal duel) that I had not an opportunity for writing.

You will receive, in fact, three portraits. They are as follows:—

No. 1. A drawing in chalk, on light-brown paper, of the face as large as the original. I had intended to write a memorandum on it, but in my hurry it was forgotten. Perhaps you would have the kindness to add it, if you think it worth while—viz.

> "Drawn by S. K., and traced with talc, on the original fresco by Giotto; discovered in the Chapel of the Palazzo del Podestà, Florence, on the 21st July 1840, before it was retouched."

No. 2. A small sketch in water-colours, giving the colours of the dress, and the heads supposed to be of Corso Donati and Brunetto Latini.

No. 3. A Lithography by the painter and restorer Marini,

* Mr Taylor was a member of the firm that printed Rossetti's *Amor Platonico*. His book was, I think, *Michelangelo considered as a Philosophic Poet*.

who uncovered the painting. This is made on a tracing by himself.

I thought it useful to send you these in order to give you a better idea of this very interesting discovery—Dante, under 30 years of age. With respect to No. 1, it is fixed with glue-water, and will not rub out with common usage. The only thing it is liable to is the cracking or bending of the paper, which sometimes in a face alters the expression.

Since I drew it, I have had the mortification to see the original retouched, and its beauty destroyed. You will perceive that the eye is wanting. A deep hole in the wall was found exactly on that spot, as if done on purpose. It was necessary to fill it that it might not extend further: not content, they ordered Sig. Marini to paint the eye on it, and he has daubed over the face in many parts, to the ruin of its expression and character. It is now 15 years older, a mean, pinched expression, and an effeminate character, compared to what it was. It is not quite so bad as the lithography I send you, but not far from it. When I saw what was done, I asked a young man, his assistant, if it was done with colours in tempera, and he assured me, with a boast, that it was in bon fresco. If so, Dante is gone for good. But I have still hopes that he spoke only of the eye, and many of my friends think it can only be accomplished on the old and hard painting by some distemper-colour of glue, size, or egg; and, if so, a damp cloth fixed on it for half-an-hour will bring it all away without injuring the original fresco. I mean to take my time, and perhaps some day I may restore Dante to himself a second time. I had the principal part in the late discovery.

The lithography I send you is exceedingly unlike and incorrect, although a tracing. In shading and finishing he

has totally lost and changed the outline, if he ever had it. It is vulgar, old, and effeminate—the contrary in every respect to the original. The Florentines of to-day cannot draw, nor even trace. Think of what such a hand would do, if allowed to paint over it! and that has been the case. It is a misfortune when the direction of the fine arts is in the hands of an ignorant man, chosen only for his *Nobility*! Our Direttore with his cleaners has been the ruin of paintings in the Galleries, since I have been here, to the value of £60,000 or £80,000 sterling — and the money is the least part of the loss. When I mentioned to you that my drawing was a secret, I only meant that, if known here that I obtained access to make a tracing by bribery, it would compromise those who had assisted me. You are welcome to show it to whom you please, and *do whatever you wish with it.* But I recommend you not to give it away, for it is the *only* copy that has been made to my knowledge before the fresco was retouched, except the miserable lithography which I send; and, if so bad a copy was produced by the help of tracing, and from the original in its pure state, nothing very good is to be expected in future. The eye in the said lithography was, of course, added by the copier. You will perceive by my drawing that the outline (the eyelash) remained, which was fortunate, as it gives the exact situation of the feature.

We are in daily expectation of the arrival of The Book of Mystery.* I am doubly anxious, from the distinguished honour you have conferred on me. The Marquis and the Professor are full of gratitude to you, but the Frenchman (*entre nous*) seemed to confer a favour rather than receive one. And so great a one! *Gente francesca!*

* *i.e.* The *Mistero dell' Amor Platonico*—which was dedicated to Mr Kirkup.

The scientific meeting of Florence commences to-morrow, and ends on the 8th Oct. It opens with a grand Mass of Spontini, in the Church of S. Croce. Galileo's shrine will be the favourite of the four great Tuscans—besides whom, there is a host of secondary stars: F. Barberini, C. Marsuppini, Leonardo Aretino, Lami, Mascagni, Alfieri, Rinuccini, Alberti, etc., etc., etc.

Do you know the Improvisatore Regaldi? and his *Carme a Firenze*—written about three years ago. There are some lines on the subject of S. Croce.

God bless you, my dear friend, and allow me once more to thank you for all your kindness, and to subscribe myself

Most sincerely yours,

SEYMOUR KIRKUP.

Best remembrances to Sig. Carlo (Eastlake, his name in Rome).

The name of the bearer of the portrait is Plowden. He is a banker of Florence, and may be heard of at Messrs Harris & Farquhar, Bankers, of London. He will send it you, I hope, or leave it himself.

C.

FLORENCE, *5th February* 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Let me add my thanks to the rest of the world for the mental enjoyment afforded by your *Beatrice*. My share is the greater for the handsome and honourable mention you make of me. I am proud of your approbation and good opinion, and am doubly grateful for the rank in

your esteem which you have so generously bestowed on me. The book has met with unusual success here. It has converted many. Whether the name has attracted the public, or the compactness has excited the idle, or the cheapness the economic, or all together, I know not, but it has been much read and admired. Italians and Tramontani are all full of it. I think in general they are grateful for the light; although it destroys a romantic illusion, which has been much cherished, especially on this spot, but which they cannot now entertain, except at the expense of adhering to an absurdity, or rather many absurdities. Some, however, are too far committed, and have too much vanity to acknowledge themselves wrong—the vulgar and the selfish in particular.

For my own part, I have found the Ragionamento in part a renewal and condensation of what I had already learned from your former works, divided and spread through them. In this first Ragionamento you have not given the demonstration (I suppose it will follow in a succeeding one) of Boccaccio's fault respecting May-Day, which is so complete and curious in the *Misteri Platonici*. . . .

The most important of your decisions is confirmed and strengthened in this volume: I mean your identification of Beatrice and Filosofia. Your three reasons at the top of p. 20 are new and unanswerable. How completely Dante blindfolds the superficial reader (which I was, till you taught me to fathom him) by making one believe that the lady at the window was *mundane philosophy*, and that Beatrice, or *Divine Science*, reproaches Dante in Purgatory for having yielded to her attractions for a short time. . . .

I am so engrossed by your work that I am carried away and not answering your very kind and most friendly letter. A thousand thanks for it. I know how your time is filled,

and have always wondered how you can get through all. I fear even writing you, but you desired me to send you all I think of *Beatrice*. My letter would be long indeed if I touched on all its beauties: I should copy the book. There are many additional discoveries in the weaving of this mystic web which the book is rich in. You still surprise those whom you have already convinced. You are certainly an extraordinary Unraveller — a Disentangler — and I will say that, notwithstanding the dry task of unpicking knots, tight-drawn on purpose to resist skill and force, you have performed it with a skill and elegance that render it exciting and delightful to follow.

You desire all my "opposizioni." Lord help me! Can I find an error or two of the press? . . .

I am longing for the next Ragionamento; I don't know if others want much more to convince them, but in general the first part seems to have had that effect.

Mr Lyell judges me, as you do, too partially. All I have learned I owe to you; and I confess to you that I have often found it difficult, even with your powerful help, to remove the substantial screen which Dante has built up *purposely* to conceal and protect his secret. But, when I think of you, who have, alone and single-handed, knocked over so many formidable barriers, and shown us the gardens and roses, the groves, the apples, the laurels, the olives, the flowers, the stags, and all the magic machinery of secret romance, I am lost in thinking how you found your way in such a labyrinth, and what immense and curious courses of reading you must have gone through, turning all you obtained to the accomplishing your will and determination to penetrate an untrod region, without a track or vestige to guide you. I wish I had the ability to write a description

of your *Misteri*. Perhaps I could be of use in lending a hand merely, as I have studied them much; but *my* tools are paint-brushes, and I am not practised in the art of writing. My education has been too defective for me ever to have ventured in print. A weak defender is more dangerous than a strong opponent, and all I could hope would be perhaps to hit on some thought that might have escaped others; but without some help from the third heaven (which a good friend of mine knows of) I should not be able to clothe it so as to render it decent.

I observe what you say on the subject of necessary reserve on certain subjects. You are quite right. You cannot be too careful in your situation and with your family. From your letter I see that your opinions are nearer mine than I supposed. But, as I am living out of the world and am perfectly free from it, I can safely be as explicit as I please. I have no reserve, and, if ever *the* cause require a word beyond the customary and necessary limits, call upon me to say it, or say anything for me against priestcraft and king-craft. That is my religion.

I don't wonder at Mr Lyell's exultation at your *Beatrice*. There are some master-touches amongst the new proofs, both in matter and manner, both close reasoning and light. . . .

The three pomegranates in Giotto's fresco are so uncertain in their appearance, from injury and time, that I was doubtful about them, but a word from you decides the question in my mind. They are chipped and much obliterated; and, from their seeming a sort of double outline, and no shade or colour but the yellow drapery on which they are painted, I took them for an embroidery on the breast of the Barone. Some remains of fingers and stalk, however, had led the

Florentines to consider them as melograni, and they were puzzling their brains to find a meaning. . . .

Your whole-length portrait of yourself is full of nature and character, and therefore it must be very like: I thank you for it. And here is mine:—a little thin old man, 54, formerly dark, now very grey. Fond of fun, but not often tempted to indulge in it, and seldom depressed. Living alone in an old tower with two dogs only—a servant coming daily for a few hours. Disliking much to go into company, and especially to dress in cold weather, being slovenly even in my younger days. I live very temperately and never take wine. I am very active, more from lightness than strength, for I feel the effects of years and illness. Just now I boast, for I have had extraordinary health this autumn and winter. I paint a little, and read a good deal. I ought to do more in both, with opportunities and perfect liberty, but I am slow and stupid. My memory, too, is weaker than it was.

Lord Vernon has twice desired me to present his best compliments and remembrances to you. He hopes you have received his book (through Molini). There is an outline in it from my tracing of Dante's head, and, though it is not very correct, it is the best yet done. . . .

When will your new edition of *Iddio e l'Uomo* come out? I admired it much in its former state. Forgive the length of this letter, and remember me to Eastlake and Keightley.

Believe me, with sincere affection,

Your faithful friend,

SEYMOUR KIRKUP.

No. 4.—Letters (or Extracts from Letters) from Giuseppe Mazzini — Eleven to Rossetti, and one to another Correspondent

The following are the only letters from Mazzini that remain among my father's papers—except some other three or four, too trifling to be printed. The originals are naturally in Italian; the translation is mine. Letters A. and B. relate to a certain Galassi and Vantini, whom I do not remember, but the letters explain themselves well enough. Mention is also made of a "little book" by my father, which was *Rome towards the Middle of the Nineteenth Century*. Letters C, D, and E, refer to a school which was got up in London, by some leading resident Italians interested in the lot of their fellow-countrymen, for the instruction of the poorer and hitherto much neglected members of the colony — organ-grinders, plaster-cast vendors, models, waiters, journeymen, etc. The ice-cream purveyor did not exist at that remote date. This school, held in the Hatton Garden quarter, went on for some few years, dignified by the countenance of Mazzini, and greatly indebted to the practical work of (among others) Filippo Pistrucci, who was a painter, teacher, writer, and improvisatore, brother of the celebrated medallist. Rossetti of course concurred, but without taking any very active part. Letters F, G, and H, refer mainly to a MS. which my father wished to send to Paris—being, I take it, the selection of his poems, many of them youthful, which were published at Lausanne, under the title *Versi*. There is also some mention of the Conte Giuseppe Ricciardi, named on p. 91 of the present book. He belonged to the Mazzinian sect, but sometimes kicked against the traces, and one can see in the correspondence that the great chief found him on

occasion a little exacting and tenacious. Letter I has reference to a *fête* which Signor Giovanni Antonio Delavo, who had erected a villa on the site of the Battle of Marengo, got up on the anniversary of the conflict. He had induced my father to write a poem for that commemoration; and Mazzini, it seems, was invited to obtain the insertion, in some English newspaper, of the poem, or of some other writing connected with the occurrence. In this letter, and in the following one (J), the observations about political events deserve notice. The final letter (K) seems to belong to a late date in 1848, and to imply that various Italians, including Mazzini himself, had addressed the Swiss Diet in consequence of some complications arising out of the Italian military reverses, in conflict with the Austrians, towards the close of that memorable year of unmeasured hopes and cruel disappointments.

A few notes of my own on minor points are appended to the correspondence.

Besides the eleven letters to my father, I give one letter, of far larger purport, which is quite unconnected with my family. It was lately purchased by a daughter of mine, simply as an autograph. On the purport of this document I need not enlarge, as it speaks for itself. It stands numbered at the close "15" in Mazzini's handwriting, and would seem therefore to be one missive in a sustained correspondence. The recipient (or some one) has written upon it in Italian, "Letter from Giuseppe Mazzini"; moreover, the peculiar handwriting is quite unmistakable. It bears no date, and, for reasons readily surmisable, no postmark. In the course of the letter the addressee is spoken of as "My Corso": I presume, therefore, that his surname may have been Corso, but this *might* also be a Christian name, or might merely

mean "Corsican." A name is written by Mazzini on the back of the letter; it has been partly inked over, and looks to me more like "Mr Clare" than anything else.

The letter shows that the addressee had some relations with Vincenzo Gioberti, the celebrated Churchman and Minister of State, whose leading work, *Il Primato d'Italia*, was published in 1845. Perhaps 1846 or thereabouts may be the date of the letter. It mentions Tommaseo, a multifarious man of letters, whom English people may remember as having written the inscription on Casa Guidi, Florence, for Mrs Browning; Buonarroti, a member of the house of the great Michelangelo; and Bozzelli, the Liberal politician in Naples, who came to precarious power in 1848. My father has mentioned him on p. 98. Libri appears to be the Librarian of that name, settled in Paris, who succumbed under a charge of serious frauds. The names of Malmusi and Bianco are not recognized by me.

A.

4 York Buildings, King's Road, Chelsea.
28th March 1841.

My dear Signore Rossetti,

You warmly recommended to Vantini one of our brother exiles, Galassi. You recommended him for some employment, and that is well. But to discover an employment is a lengthy affair, and Galassi has not a halfpenny in the world, and I, for the last month and a half, have been assisting him so far as my means allow—or indeed *don't* allow. However, an expedient has offered, equally acceptable to Galassi and to us — that of sending him to

Spain. What between the friends that he has there, and others whom we could obtain for him, and his knowledge of the language, and other points, he would not find it difficult to procure occupation; here, not understanding, nor perhaps making himself understood, he would not succeed in a hundred years. Also a ship has been found which would convey him to Bilbao or Santander for a sum of £5; so that, with some few other pounds to get along with at the first start, Galassi might have a chance of better fortune. Now the ship will leave on the 30th of this month, and I can and will do my share — not the whole. Therefore I appeal to you and to other good Italians. And from you, as being better than many others, I wish for two things instead of one; I would like that, if you *can*, you would inscribe your name for some shillings on the accompanying subscription-list—and that, if you *will*, you would write off to Vantini, informing him that your client is preparing to depart, and does not need to be assisted save this one time, and you would send on the list to him. Vantini is indeed one of the best-hearted of them, and this I know by experience. I would myself write to him, but have recommended so many to him that I dare no more. Besides, it seems to me better, since *you* made the beginning, that you should bring this good work to a close. None the less, I shall be grateful to you, as if you undertook it now, and solely for my sake.

Meanwhile I am greatly obliged to you for the little book you sent me; good and useful. We perhaps do not wholly agree as to the remedies to be applied to our Italy; but certainly we do agree as to her wounds, and you do a beneficial work in laying bare unremittingly one of the most pernicious. For the rest, I trust in God that one day we shall understand each other, and that you will be unwilling

to hold aloof from our National Association, now re-organized in all quarters, and on the way to power.

Believe meantime in the affectionate esteem of your

GIUSEPPE MAZZINI.

B.

4 YORK BUILDINGS, KING'S ROAD, CHELSEA.
? 1841.

MY DEAR SIGNORE ROSSETTI,

I have managed with Vantini through a different method; anyhow, I thank you for the intention, and for what you did for my client.

If you will send an order to Rolandi to deliver, to some one on my behalf, a certain number of copies of your booklet, I will send them, four days hence, by an opportunity to Spain. At present I have no opportunity as to Switzerland, but I have correspondents there; and, were the chance to present itself to you sooner than to me, address to Signor Fanciola, Postmaster at Locarno (Ticino) for "Signor Pietro Ol——"; and the copies will be distributed in accordance with your intentions.

I have promised to send to a friend in New York the copy of the Papal Excommunication of Carbonarism—launched, I think, in 1820. Do you happen to know where I could find it?

I am aware of your circumstances;* but what is requested

* By the phrase "your circumstances" Mazzini, I think, refers not so much to moderate pecuniary means, but rather to the fact that Rossetti, maintaining himself and his family by the teaching of Italian in private families and schools, could not with any prudence put himself forward as a revolutionary agitator. I am satisfied that he did *not* join the Association named by Mazzini.

of you would be no more than the influence of your name among the Italians who know you. The object is to have you as our brother in our Association, so that to any inquirer one could say—"All those who truly love the cause of their country have comprehended that unity of country cannot be founded without unity of association." There would be a slight monthly contribution fixed by yourself; there would be (and this is the most serious condition, but, as you will see, inevitable) the certainty that, in writing about our country, you would leave off recommending monarchic constitutionalism, and repeat with us: "May God and the People be the salvation of Italy!" And these, for us who are abroad, are about the only conditions of the Association. For the rest, I believe that a copy of our *General Instruction*, given to you by Pistrucci, has remained in your hands. The whole of our thought is there expressed; and, if one day you feel able to say "I accept it and make it mine," you will be received by us with joy and sincere brotherliness.

Meanwhile good-bye, and believe me

Yours,

GIUSEPPE MAZZINI.

If you like, you should place at my disposal a certain number of copies for Marseilles, and for Italy in that direction; I will provide for their reaching.

C.

LONDON.

? *November* 1844.

MY DEAR SIGNOR ROSSETTI,

I transcribe verbatim a letter that I have received.

"To Signori Rossetti, Pepoli,* and Mazzini. A Special Committee chosen by the Italian Working-men begs you to come together on Sunday 4th December 1844, at the hour and place most convenient to yourselves, to receive a communication of high importance; and, in the confidence that you will grant us this favour, we thank you meanwhile. The members of the aforesaid Committee—Odoardo Villani, G. B. Soldi, A. Berni, Giuseppe Gandolfini."

I don't know anything about the object of the meeting. I know the four signatories, and they are good worthy Italians. In the impossibility, for lack of time, of corresponding as to hour and place, I take the liberty of fixing for the meeting my house, between 1 and 2 P.M. I am notifying to Pepoli and to them. Try and come if you can; or, if perchance you cannot, write so as to relieve me of responsibility.

Believe me always

Yours,

GIUSEPPE MAZZINI.

D.

4 YORK BUILDINGS, CHELSEA.

? May 1845.

MY DEAR SIGNOR ROSSETTI,

We have decided to have on an early day in June a concert for the benefit of the school; Pistrucci, I suppose, will give you all the particulars of the project, or I will give them myself. You will then see how

* The Conte Carlo Pepoli, a member of an ancient and highly distinguished Bolognese family, was then a political exile in London. He ultimately became a Senator of the Italian Kingdom. An epistle in verse had, in his youth, been addressed to him by the great poet Leopardi.

far and in what way you may be able to aid towards a good result. But meanwhile I have to beg you urgently for one thing. I have a letter of introduction to Miss Kemble,* and I want to request her to sing: singing for a school is quite a different thing from singing in a theatre. I know that she at one time asked Giannone† for a letter to you, and that you saw her. I don't know on what terms you have remained with her, but, knowing *you*, I presume good terms. Could you add a letter to the one which I hold? or could you join me in a visit? or, if nothing else, write to her on your own part?—and, in this last case, on Monday or Tuesday. Thus assailed at one moment from two sides, she would perhaps surrender.

Whatever you decide, please oblige me with a couple of words in reply, and with the lady's present address,‡ if you can give this.

Wish me well, and believe me
Your very affectionate
GIUSEPPE MAZZINI.

E.

108 HIGH HOLBORN.
31*st October* 1845.

MY DEAR SIGNOR ROSSETTI,

Pistrucci told me that he would undertake to beg you to allow your voice to be heard, in one way or other, at the Anniversary of our School, 10th November.§

* Adelaide Kemble, afterwards Mrs Sartoris.

† He was, I think, a music-master in Paris.

‡ The address (as noted down by my mother on Mazzini's letter) was No. 40 Clarges Street.

§ As I have mentioned in my published Memoir of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, my father spoke at this Anniversary-meeting, followed by Mazzini.

Still, I will join to his my poor request. The fact of the School is an Italian fact; and it ought, even with a view to the English, to have the moral support of all Italians who, like yourself, do honour to the name of our common country.

Confiding in your willingness to hearken to our request, believe, dear Signor Rossetti, in the full friendly esteem of

Yours,

GIUSEPPE MAZZINI.

F.

19 CROPLEY STREET, NEW NORTH ROAD.
[? *January* 1847].

VERY DEAR SIGNOR ROSSETTI,

An opportunity has arisen. Will you give the MS. to the bearer? He will be leaving to-morrow, or at latest on Tuesday.

I thank you for your good wishes for the year now commenced; but I have no hope of joy, save one alone—that of bearing witness in death, as I have endeavoured to do in life, to my Italian faith. Pray that this may occur within this year, and believe me always

Your much attached

GIUSEPPE MAZZINI.

G.

19 CROPLEY STREET, NEW NORTH ROAD.
[? *January* 1847].

MY DEAR SIGNOR ROSSETTI,

The Manuscript has gone off—not anything else. Ricciardi, Janer, Pistrucci, will have patience, and await other opportunities which I shall have towards

the end of the month. We cannot, for exhortations and sonnets, be guilty of an indiscretion towards English travellers, who consider they have stretched a point if they accept letters, and are quite capable of throwing in your face a "Why not employ a bookseller?"—which I should not like. However, I undertake, for love of you, to get all the things off, but distributing them among various travellers. A slight delay will not spoil matters; nor will the exhortations to return to Paris accelerate to any great extent the progress of French civilization.

I was unable to charge my traveller — an Englishman, young, and an officer—with the eight shillings, for he would probably have forgotten them. But I have written that you had given them to me, to be paid to Ricciardi—and probably they *will* be paid one of these days.

Believe me, with all esteem,

Your much attached

GIUSEPPE MAZZINI.

H.

17 CROPLEY STREET, NEW NORTH ROAD.
8th February [1847].

MY DEAR SIGNOR ROSSETTI,

To your MS. has happened what often happens to our Italian affairs: in trying to do good, one does harm. If we had waited patiently for that Italian traveller of mine of the 24th January, the MS. would at this date be in Paris. But, urged on by my own wishes, and also by the strong pressure, I seized the opportunity of an Englishman, Captain Boulton, and consigned the volume to him. He, as he said, was to leave on the following day.

And, knowing nothing to the contrary, I supposed him to have departed, in fact; until, five or six days ago, becoming suspicious from the silence of my correspondents, and making active quest for the officer, I found that owing to some family incident or other he had deferred his departure, and had indeed gone off to the country—whence he writes that he will be leaving in seven days!!

You should, therefore, be under no alarm for the MS. Like yourself, I regret the delay, but it is not my fault. If, earlier than the seven days, I get an opportunity, I will see that the MS. goes off before the officer; if not, not.

I felt anxious to reply to you about the MS., as the matter of most importance. As to Ricciardi's eight copies, please inform Ricciardi that one can't tell a tourist, "Take with you a boxful of things"; that it is a miracle if I found some one to convey the eight; that, sooner or later, I shall find some one to convey the others; and that moreover I would not have undertaken, except for wishing to do a service to you whom I greatly esteem, to send off either the eight or the sixteen. Neither would I set going from Paris to London, and then from London to Paris, copies of my own performances, but would order them to be burned or given away.

And believe me ever

Your much attached and affectionate

GIUSEPPE MAZZINI.

I.

19 CROPLEY STREET, NEW NORTH ROAD.

? *May* 1847.

DEAR SIGNOR ROSSETTI,

I cannot succeed in the endeavour. Among the leading newspapers, I had no hope save in the *Morning*

Chronicle, and this one declines. The quantity of matter, electoral movements, literary articles already promised, etc., form the pretext. The true reason, I think, is that the apotheosis of Napoleon has no grateful sound to English reminiscences. Besides, a short paragraph upon the celebration of the 6th * had already received insertion in several journals when your letter arrived, and they are not fond of repetitions.

For myself, I, as you know, do not believe in King nor in Pope: I believe in God and in ourselves. They may do what they choose, and try to compromise Charles Albert † in the face of Austria by every means: the rabbit will not be changed into a lion. I say rabbit, and might say fox. To celebrate Marengo, a battle won by an Italian but in the name and under the banner of the French nation, while we have the Austrians our masters two paces off, savours to me of bragging rather than of patriotism. I see these demonstrations with pleasure, because they furnish an occasion for impressing on the people, who know not, the name of Italy, and that of her oppressors; but, as an individual, I feel inclined to smile with a trifle of bitterness. In Piedmont the rabbit is now in the vein of reaction; and not only the suppression of the subscription,‡ but that of the Family-readings conceded to the Jesuits, and other recent acts, speak clearly enough. However, we shall see.

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* This must have been a *different* celebration from that in which Signor Delavo was concerned. The latter was fixed for 14th May, the anniversary of the Battle of Marengo.

† King Charles Albert, of Piedmont, who had to abdicate in 1849.

‡ Mazzini's word (indistinctly written) appears to be "raccolta," which frequently means "harvest," but may probably here mean "subscription." Perhaps it was a public subscription for reinstating amnestied emigrants in the Papal States.

I keep the letter for another two days, for a final endeavour; afterwards, I shall return it to you. Meanwhile believe me always

Your much attached and affectionate

GIUSEPPE MAZZINI.

J.

[The reference to Ricciardi's book follows on more or less from what appears in two previous letters. The book may possibly have been a predictive *History of Italy from* 1850 *to* 1900, which was published in 1842. This letter, written in the great year of European revolutions, 1848, belongs, I suppose, to a very early date in that year; perhaps prior to the insurrection in Paris, which began on 23rd February. There had been some disturbances in Milan on 3rd January, and a rising in Messina from 6th January. On 22nd February martial law was proclaimed in Lombardy by the Austrians.]

19 CROPLEY STREET, NEW NORTH ROAD.
? *February* 1848.

MY DEAR SIGNOR ROSSETTI,

I send you by Parcels Delivery Company ten copies of Ricciardi's book, admiring our friend's tenacity of memory, especially in this time of events. These are the only copies that I find in my possession. If I *had* a larger number, the Italian friends who during the long interval have been frequenting my house must have appropriated them with no great ceremony, much as they appropriate my own books. None the less, if ever Ricciardi were to complain, I declare myself ready to pay the expense of the

copies deficient. I ought to have been on the watch, but that is not my habit.

The affairs of Italy are going and will go on their right course—that is, to the expulsion of the Austrians from the Lombardo-Venetian territory. The Sicilian insurrection has done more for the Italian cause, in a few days of popular action, than two years of petitioning.

Believe me always

Your much attached

GIUSEPPE MAZZINI.

K.

19 CROPLEY STREET, NEW NORTH ROAD.

? *November* 1848.

MY DEAR SIGNOR ROSSETTI,

Here is the Address which we sent to the Swiss Diet. I will add that a discussion on military capitulations was in consequence started in the Diet by the Ticino and the Bas-Valais; a discussion which, as befalls everything important in that Central (not Government but) mis-Government, was not settled, but held over (as they say) *ad referendum*.

Make any use of me that I can manage, and believe me always

Your much attached

GIUSEPPE MAZZINI.

L.

To "CORSO"

BROTHER,

I have received yours of the 8th. That I should write to you at much length on the subject of your

letter is not possible. You, however, will certainly not suppose that I evade the discussion, nor that I do not set a right value on your convictions, or do not care about them. No indeed; and you are mistaken in fancying that your frankness of speech could ever offend me. If you but knew how the religion of truth is the religion for me! and how much any real conviction inspires me with respect, if not assent! But this is not a question to be disposed of in a few letters; nor have I time, beset as I am by a thousand distractions through my dream of Italian initiative, to enter on a discussion. And, if I ever have time, I shall compose, I confess to you, a whole volume—but I shall never publish it, unless a Republican revolution should have broken out. For the present, I understand this latest reaction in favour of Christianity, and I see it to be necessary, and acknowledge it as useful. A true knowledge of Christianity—its nature, its mission—will follow from this study. Just as, in my view, *reform* must naturally precede the securing of independence, liberty, and equality, in political dogma, so do I believe that the political synthesis, or at any rate a glimpse of this synthesis, must, in the new epoch, precede in renovated Europe the manifestation of the religious synthesis of the epoch. Rights were of yore individual; and it was natural that first the *individual* should be emancipated, that the *instrument* should be formed to acquire an application of those rights in the political department. At the present time the reverse is the case. The question is that of the *social* synthesis. The *instrument* is no longer the *individual*, but the people. Therefore the people, which is to secure the religious formula, requires to be *constituted*: therefore a political revolution before the religious one.

Only, you know what I have always said: like advanced

scouts, secret sentinels of human nature, *intelligences* must begin to proclaim that they descry the *new lands* and the new law. And therefore I should have supposed you to be among them; and I still believe that you will be among them later on. Meanwhile, as you think that my efforts (and be it observed that I am doing nothing) are to subserve the triumph of Christianity, so do I think that yours are to subserve the triumph of the new synthesis, the *social* synthesis, philosophy merged into religion: because — I do not deny it—my "harmonized dualism" is precisely this harmonizing of philosophy with religion—two things which hitherto have been at odds, and which will end by coalescing. Yours is, without your perceiving it, an eclecticism and no more. Your *quid tertium*, neither *catholic* nor *primitive* (two distinctions as to which I should have much to say), is an Utopia, or rather a chimera. You don't perceive that that which you call *primitive* is at bottom nothing except Christianity in the soul, not any social form; that the second epoch — *i.e.* Catholicism — is rightly the application of Christianity to society; and that the Reformation — a cynical movement, whatever you may say about it — came, in fact, to say of Christianity: "You are not susceptible of any social application, of any national unity, because you are an individualistic formula and no more: stay you in your proper sphere."

You and I, I perceive, regard the Reformation, and all things, from different points of view.

And now see what is the outcome of the idea, "Christianity is an *eternal* religion, an unique religious synthesis." And what of mankind prior to Christianity? Oh in what sense do you understand God, if you admit that He gave the unique eternal synthesis some thousands of years after the race had been created? And the unity of the mind of God? A

progressive law at the beginning, and an eternal synthesis later on? But no more of this; you go too far. Believing as I do, with yourself, in continuous progression, there ought to be between us only a question of time, but never a denial of a new synthesis when the time comes. *Christianity asserts its perfection and eternity as a fundamental principle: therefore you cannot, without destroying it, say that it is not the whole of truth.* But once again, no more of this. Christianity had to profess itself perfect and eternal, and I even admit that. But when did Christianity ever affect to be a social religion? *That* is the question. Christianity is the formula of the individual, and as such is eternal and perfect to my thinking—for that formula is what no one can nullify. It means liberty and equality; and who can ever henceforth exclude those two bases of progress from the progress of the future? Christianity therefore will endure. Only, behind that formula one seeks for another—the social. Where is the contradiction?

Tell me, my Corso, with your hand on your heart. To the arguments which I scatter in my letters, hurried, unconnected, and almost sportive, the true fruit of profound convictions, and which you (permit me to say) shirk a little in your replies, have you anything to oppose? Do not some of the things which I say, if you think them over seriously, cast some doubts on your mind?

As to what you cite to me, regarding miracles, and the resurrection of Christ, etc., I will not discuss to-day; but I confess to you, it seems to me strange that you should regard those as being irrevocably proved in history.

I say it seriously, some one will come to furbish up my ideas, without knowing that I advocated them. I am more than likely to die without doing this, because I am conscious

of my mission, and I know the duration of it—and I know that it is not I who will wage the war. Truth means to run her course, and she will do it; but I shall not lay the foundation-stone of the edifice—I have no future. I have discerned, but it is not given to me to do more; therefore I still devote these my days to a work very inferior to that which my longings would have sought for — the actual production of the instrument. I am neither more nor less than a political revolutionist, and to this I resign myself. Would that I may at least be that, and wrench this Italy that I love out of the mire in which she lies, set her freed face to face with her destinies, and say to her, "Now make them yours."

As you see, I am writing to Gioberti. Writing thus to all and sundry begins to weigh upon me. I have moments of *spleen*, of individualism which rebels; and at those moments I seem to myself to be playing the prostitute, and making Italian liberty play the like part. For if you but knew how many letters, and these to intellects so-called, and all useless! But these are moments of irritation, arising out of what I have myself been suffering these three years, and this is more than you suppose, and you know it not, and never will know it. Then I return to myself; and, where I can see any little advantage, any symptom of duty, I submit and write.

Hand also the enclosed lines to Tommaseo, who, like others, does not understand me, and does not understand the situation in which we are.

Have you seen Libri? You will tell me that I am pertinacious; this is true. But all those who desert me, without any fault of mine against them, and without my being even able to guess the reason, cause me real pain.

If you know Malmusi, or can get at any one who knows him, don't forget to tell him that for the love of God he should reassure me concerning the arrival of certain letters of mine: his silence troubles me.

Of politics I say nothing, as I do not mean to speak about them until the first half of the month of October; then I shall have data from which to speak. Meanwhile I repeat to you what I told you.

Did you ever see Buonarroti? Do you know where Bianco is? Of him I know nothing of late, and I am anxious to write to him. Do they ever write to you from Turin? What Italians are you acquainted with? Bozzelli?

Wish well to your

STROZZI.

Put an envelope on the letter to Gioberti. Write to me what reception he gives it. Pray excuse.*

No. 5.—SIX POEMS BY GABRIELE ROSSETTI

[I give here six specimens of my father's powers as a poet. Setting aside *San Paolo in Malta*, which is only an improvise, it may be said that in all these instances the verses rank among his choice things; though many others could be quoted not inferior. The dates which I give may be regarded as correct, unless as to the final sonnet, regarding which I am uncertain.

The lyric, *Aurora del* 21 *Luglio del* 1820, was, as I have before said, extremely celebrated in its time; and the *Addio*

* The Italian word looks something like "compatisci," which corresponds to "excuse"; I am not certain about it.

alla Patria has always been an admired piece. The *San Paolo in Malta* is referred to at p. 61, and testifies to Rossetti's uncommon power as an Improvisatore; being as it is in *terza rima*, each rhyme is triplicated, and thus the improvising effort was all the more arduous.

I leave these poems to the perusal of such readers as are acquainted with Italian. To try to translate them would be little else than to scheme deliberately to spoil them.]

A.

Ad Amore

Alato bambino,
Tiranno de' cuori,
Ch' io segua il cammino
Che innanzi m' infiori?
Unendomi teco
Ch' io veggio sì cieco,
Oh quanto sarei
Più cieco di te!
Pur troppo gemei,
Fanciullo inumano!
Ma i lacci funesti
Che al piè mi cingesti
Del Tempo la mano
Mi sciolse dal piè.

A credulo cuore
Tu scaltro dispensi
Contento ed ardore
Chę inebbriano i sensi:

Ma in mezzo al contento
Prepari il tormento ;
L' ardor ti precede,
Ti segue il languor.
Nè l' alma si avvede
Del passo imprudente
Che quando a fuggire
Le manca l' ardire,
Che quando si sente
Già vinta dal cuor.

Quel dì che sul mondo
Vagisti bambino,
Un cenno iracondo
Del sordo Destino
Di face ferale
La destra immortale
Di penne funeste
Il dorso ti armò.
Le penne son queste,
O nume fallace,
Che a Pari infedele
Gonfiaron le vele,
E questa è la face
Che Troia bruciò.

Tu godi, o tiranno,
Di sparger la terra
Di gioia, d' affanno,
Di pace, di guerra ;
Ma finta è la pace,
La guerra è verace,

L' affanno rimane,
La gioia sen va.
Insidie sì strane
Ci ordisci, ci tendi,
Che a render prigione
L' augusta Ragione,
Tuoi complici rendi
Ingegno e Beltà.

Chi crede a' tuoi detti
Ne attenda la fine;
Le rose prometti
Per dargli le spine:
Ben sento che giova
Saperlo per prova;
Ma troppo al mio cuore
Tal prova costò.
La via del dolore
Io teco calcava;
Ma in mezzo del corso
Intesi il Rimorso
Che *ferma*, gridava,
Ma tardi gridò.

Quel giorno che il velo
Mi cadde dal ciglio,
Rimasi di gelo
Scorgendo il periglio:
Sul velo squarciato,
Sul laccio spezzato,
Il canto innalzai
Di mia libertà.

Ah libero omai
Dal giogo abborrito,
Sull' ara tua stessa
Crollata, depressa,
Innalzo pentito
L' altar d' Amistà.

1813.

B.

VERSI D' AMORE

Dal tuo leggiadro viso
Il mio destin dipende:
D' ugual desio mi accende
Il tuo desio.
Dal labbro tuo soltanto
Ha questo labbro il riso:
Ha dal tuo ciglio il pianto
Il ciglio mio.

1814.

C.

AURORA DEL 21 LUGLIO DEL 1820

Sei pur bella cogli astri sul crine
Che scintillan quai vivi zaffiri,
È pur dolce quel fiato che spiri,
Porporina foriera del dì.
Col sorriso del pago desio
Tu ci annunzii dal balzo vicino
Che d' Italia nell' almo giardino
Il servaggio per sempre finì.

Il rampollo d'Enrico e di Carlo,
Ei ch' ad ambo cotanto somiglia,
Oggi estese la propria famiglia,
E non servi ma figli bramò.
Volontario distese la mano
Sul volume de' patti segnati;
E il volume de' patti giurati
Della patria sull' ara posò.

Una selva di lance si scosse
All' invito del bellico squillo,
Ed all' ombra del sacro vessillo
Un sol voto discorde non fù.
E fratelli si strinser le mani,
Dauno, Irpino, Lucano, Sannita;
Non estinta ma solo sopita
Era in essi l' antica virtù.

Ma qual suono di trombe festive!
Chi s 'avanza fra cento coorti?
Ecco il forte che riede tra i forti,*
Che la patria congiunse col re!
Oh qual pompa! Le armate falangi
Sembran fiumi che inondin le strade!
Ma su tante migliaia di spade
Una macchia di sangue non v' è.

Lieta scena! Chi plaude, chi piange,
Chi diffonde viole e giacinti,
Vincitori confusi coi vinti
Avvicendano il bacio d' amor!

*. General Guglielmo Pepe.

Dalla reggia passando al tugurio
Non più finta la gioia festeggia ;
Dal tugurio tornando alla reggia
Quella gioia si rende maggior.

Genitrici de' forti campioni
Convocati dal sacro stendardo,
Che cercate col pavido sguardo?
Non temete, chè tutti son quì.
Non ritornan da terra nemica,
Istrumenti di regio misfatto,
Ma dal campo del vostro riscatto,
Dove il ramo di pace fiorì.

O beata fra tante donzelle,
O beata la ninfa che vede
Fra que' prodi l' amante che riede
Tutto sparso di nobil sudor!
Il segreto dell' alma pudica
Le si affaccia sul volto rosato,
Ed il premio finora negato
La bellezza prepara al valor.

Cittadini, posiamo sicuri
Sotto l' ombra de' lauri mietuti,
Ma coi pugni sui brandi temuti
Stiamo in guardia del patrio terren.
Nella pace prepara la guerra
Chi da saggio previene lo stolto:
Ci sorrida la pace sul volto,
Ma ci frema la guerra nel sen.

Che guardate, gelosi stranieri?
Non uscite dai vostri burroni,
Chè la stirpe dei prischi leoni
Più nel sonno languente non è.
Adorate le vostre catene;
Chi v' invidia cotanto tesoro?
Ma lasciate tranquilli coloro
Che disdegnan sentirsele al piè.

Se verrete, le vostre consorti,
Imprecando ai vessilli funesti,
Si preparin le funebri vesti,
Chè speranza per esse non v' ha.
Sazierete la fame de' corvi,
Mercenarie falangi di schiavi;
In chi pugna pe' dritti degli avi
Divien cruda la stessa pietà.

Una spada di libera mano
È saetta di Giove tonante,
Ma nel pugno di servo tremante
Come canna vacilla l' acciar.
Fia trionfo la morte per noi,
Fia ruggito l' estremo sospiro;
Le migliaia di Persia fuggiro,
I trecento di Sparta restâr!

E restaron coi brandi ne' pugni
Sopra mucchi di corpi svenati,
E que' pugni, quantunque gelati,
Rassembravan disposti a ferir.

Quello sdegno passava nel figlio
Cui fù culla lo scudo del padre,
Ed al figlio diceva la madre,
"Quest' esempio tu devi seguir."

O tutrice dei dritti dell' uomo,
Che sorridi sul giogo spezzato,
È pur giunto quel giorno beato
Che un monarca t' innalza l' altar!
Tu sul Tebro fumante di sangue
Passeggiavi qual nembo fremente,
Ma serena qual' alba ridente
Sul Sebeto t' assidi a regnar.

Una larva col santo tuo nome
Quì sen venne con alta promessa;
Noi, credendo che fossi tu stessa,
Adorammo la larva di te:
Ma, nel mentre fra gl' inni usurpati
Sfavillava di luce fallace,
Ella sparve qual sogno fugace,
Le catene lasciandoci al piè.

Alla fine tu stessa venisti
Non ombrata da minimo velo,
Ed un raggio disceso dal cielo
Sulla fronte ti veggio brillar.
Coronata di gigli perenni,
Alla terra servendo d' esempio,
Tu scegliesti la reggia per tempio,
Ove il trono ti serve d' altar.

1820.

D.

Addio alla Patria

Nella notte più serena
Era in ciel la luna piena :
Neve il dorso e fiamma il crin
Riflettea dal mar vicin
Il Vesèvo che grandeggia
Come reggia—di Vulcan :
D' arme grave—anglica nave
Trascorrea l' equoreo pian.

Quando il profugo cantore,
La cui colpa è il patrio amore,
Atteggiato di martir,
Schiuse il labbro ad un sospir
E qual flebile usignuolo,
Il suo duolo—a disfogar,
Dal naviglio—volse il ciglio
La sua terra a salutar.

O Partenope, egli dice,
O Partenope infelice,
Di tua gloria il chiaro dì
Quasi al nascere morì !
Ah dal cor t' indrizzo i carmi
Nel sottrarmi—a reo poter,
E nel bando—miserando
Sarai sempre il mio pensier !

Rè fellon che ci tradisti,
Tu rapisci e non racquisti :

Maledetto, o rè fellon,
Sii dall' austro all' aquilon !
Maledetto ogni malnato
Che ha tramato—insiem con te !
Maledetto—ogni soggetto
Che ti lambe il sozzo piè !

Ti sien contro in ogni loco
Cielo e terra, mare e foco,
Nè dien tregua a un infedel
Foco e mare, terra e ciel !
Sì, ti faccian sempre guerra
Cielo e terra—foco e mar !
Ti stia scritto—il tuo delitto
Sulla mensa e sull' altar !

Traditor, da quel momento
Che infrangesti il giuramento,
Cento stili, o traditor,
Tendon' avidi al tuo cor . . .
Deh frenate il santo sdegno,
Non n' è degno—un cor brutal,
E saetta—di vendetta
Tenga il luogo del pugnal !

Che pel fulmine di Dio
De' suoi falli ei paghi il fio,
Ma di Bruto il sacro stil
Onorar non dee quel vil !
No, non abbia il vil la gloria
Che la storia—dica un dì :

Il nefando—Ferdinando
Come Cesare perì!

Mesta Italia, io ti saluto:
Qual momento hai tu perduto!
Quel momento, o Dio, chi sà
Se mai più ritornerà?
Già sorgea ringiovanita
L' impigrita—tua virtù . . .
Come mai—tornar potrai
Al languor di servitù?

Deh perchè non farla, o Sorte,
O men bella, o almen più forte?
L' astringesti ad invocar
Lo straniero infido acciar,
Onde o vinta o vincitrice
L' infelice—ognor servì,
E impugnando—estraneo brando
Sè medesma ognor ferì.

Ah crudel, se a questa terra
Far volevi eterna guerra,
Perchè darle poi, crudel,
Questo suolo e questo ciel?
Quì le vergini di Giove
Tutte e nove—apriro il vol,
Quì sfavilla—la scintilla
Che Prometeo tolse al sol.

Surse quì la face aurata
Sull' Europa ottenebrata,

E l' Europa a quel fulgor
Si scotea dal suo torpor.
Cento doti, Italia bella,
Lieta stella—a te largì;
Ahi t' invola—quella sola
Che ti fea regina un dì!

Libertà, tu fuggi? Ed io . . .
Io ti seguo; Italia, addio!
Libertà, non mai da te,
Mai non fia ch'io torca il piè!
Oh se un dì farai ritorno,
In quel giorno—anch'io verrò;
Ma infelice—il cor mi dice
Che mai più non tornerò!

Sì dicea; ma l' igneo monte
Decrescea nell' orizzonte,
E la luna in mezzo al ciel
S' era ascosa in grigio vel.
Par che stia con veste oscura
La Natura—a dolorar,
Par lamento—il flebil vento,
Par singulto il rotto mar.

Addio, terra sventurata! . . .
Ma la terra era celata.
Ei nel duol che l' aggravò
Chinò 'l capo e singhiozzò.
Ahi l' amor della sua terra,
Ahi qual guerra—in sen gli fà!
Infelice!—il cor gli dice
Che mai più non tornerà!

24 *Giugno* 1821.

E.

San Paolo in Malta—Canto Improvvisato

Poichè l' onda varcai non mai tranquilla
Ove spiran talor venti insoavi,
Fra cui Cariddi freme e latra Scilla,
Scilla e Cariddi che le intere navi
Ingoian nelle viscere petrose,
E ne vomitan poi le rotte travi,
Oltre l' etnee voragini fumose,
A cui perpetuo april le balze infiora,
Solcai dell' afro mar le strade ondose.
In porpora augural sorgea l' aurora,
Quando un' isola apparve al punto istesso
A me che meditava in su la prora;
Isola che in offrir facile accesso
L' Africa con l' Europa in sè marita,
A due parti del mondo uscita e ingresso;
Isola che bilingue e tripartita
Il passeggier nel suo cammin navale
Con quattro porti a riposarsi invita.
Già vi scendea del mio desir sull' ale,
Quando dall' alto udii voce tonante:
"Scrivi quel che vedrai, scrivi, o mortale!"
Levai sorpreso il pallido sembiante,
E scender vidi nuvola d' argento
Che agli occhi mi vibrò balen fiammante:
E dopo un giro vorticoso e lento
Un cittadin del ciel mi dischiudea,
E tal che ancor lo veggio, ancor lo sento.
Gran parte delle sfere onde scendea
Avea nel volto, e lunga fluttuando
Sfioccata barba al petto suo pendea.

Un pallio sinuoso e venerando
Lo panneggiava, e avea tra fiero e pio
Un libro in una man, nell' altra un brando.
All' inspirato suo decor natio
Riconobbi il maestro delle genti,
Vaso d' elezïon, lingua di Dio,
Colui che or con ragioni, or con portenti,
Apostolo e filosofo, fu vago
Ne' varj climi illuminar le menti.
E poichè offrì la venerata imago
Del Verbo Eterno in Efeso e Corinto,
Mostrò l' ignoto Dio nell' Areopago ;
Ed in Damasco dalla grazia vinto,
Da nemico di Dio fattone messo,
Ancor vivente al terzo ciel fu spinto.
Nel ravvisarlo al vivido riflesso,
Di riverenza l' anima ripiena,
Mutolo al piè gli caddi e genuflesso.
L' accerchiata di rai fronte serena
Paolo abbassando allor : "Sorgi," mi disse,
"O figliuol dell' armonica sirena,
Sorgi e respira. Io so quanto soffrisse
Di tempeste il tuo cor che un porto chiede,
E un porto il fausto ciel già ti prefisse.
Quell' isola gentil che là si vede
Curvar flavo e petroso il fianco aprico,
Cui basso il mar lambe amoroso il piede,
Al tuo vagar fia di ricetto amico.
Bella ospitalità pronta ai soccorsi
Colà si annida, ed io per prova il dico ;
Chè poichè Saulo caddi e Paolo sorsi,
E la spada in gettar presi la penna,
Vangelizzando l' Orïente io corsi,

E quella Fè ch' anche gli stolti assenna,
Fuggendo la tirannide feroce,
Meco salì sulla velata antenna;
E ovunque alzando l' inspirata voce,
In faccia alla fremente Idolatria,
Rovesciò l' are e vi piantò la croce.
Or mentre trascorrea l' equorea via,
E ministra al vagante apostolato
Pellegrina la Fè meco venia,
Lo spirto delle tenebre sdegnato
Contro il mio pin che questo mar fendea
L' onde rimescolò col freddo fiato,
E dal nembo mugghiante in cui fremea
Stese il braccio nemico, e con furore
Negli scogli spezzò la prora achea.
Ma quel che impera ai venti alto Signore
Mi guidò fra quei semplici isolani
A dissipar le nebbie dell' errore.
E i varj ne fugai sogni profani,
Onde impresse vi avean larghe vestigia
Fenici, Greci, Punici, e Romani:
E la potenza eterea, equorea, e stigia,
Dei falsi dei, figli di reo consiglio,
Per me disparve da Melita e Ogigia.
Nè sol Giove, Nettun, Pluto, in esiglio
Mandai dall' are, ma Calipso istessa
Onde accolti quì furo Ulisse e il figlio.
E fin d' Ercole Tirio al suol depressa
Cadde l' imago, cara al volgo insano,
Che nei numismi ancor si vede impressa.
Quivi rettile reo mi morse invano,
Che dai sarmenti accesi in cui soffiava
Sbucò fischiando e m' addentò la mano;

E mentre a gonfio collo raddoppiava
Il morso in questa man, da me sospinto,
Spense nel foco la maligna bava.
Ciascun credea che di pallor dipinto,
Quasi iniquo omicida a Dio rubello,
Per quel velen cader dovessi estinto.
Ma sopra i giorni miei vegliava quello
Che salvi trasse i tre dalla fornace,
E dai leoni il giovin Danïello.
Ei volle questo suolo asil di pace,
Onde fe' che per me restasse illeso
Dal tosco d' ogni rettile mordace.
Del portento insperato ognun sorpreso
Mi cadde al piè con supplicanti rai,
Come s' io fossi un dio dal ciel disceso.
E bene al guardo altrui tal mi mostrai,
Chè dalle genti estenuate e grame
Cento pallidi morbi allor fugai.
Di Publio udii le filïali brame,
Sì che a suo padre, in preda a morbo ingordo,
Dell' egra vita rannodai lo stame.
Tolsi a Morte l' acciar di sangue lordo,
Sordi e muti guarii, con tal portento
Che il muto lo narrò, l' intese il sordo.
Corser d' allor ben cento lustri e cento
E sempre questi resi almi confini
Asili dell' industria e del contento.
E vigilando ognor sui lor destini
Nel successivo imperversar degli anni
Scacciai Goti, Normanni, e Saracini.
Farne una rocca contro agli Ottomanni
Disegnai poscia, ne parlai nel cielo,
E mi fe' plauso il precursor Giovanni.

Ei che a vittoria del divin vangelo
Proteggeva un equestre ordin d' onore
Che pria regnò fra il Libano e il Carmelo,
Per rinnovarne il pristino splendore
Meco discese per le vie del tuono
Del Quinto Carlo a favellarne al core.
E Carlo allor dal riverito trono
Per compenso di Rodi (ahi Rodi tristo !)
Ai campioni di Dio ne fece un dono.
Ed essi intenti a glorïoso acquisto
Spinser nautiche flotte all' uopo accolte,
Il gran sepolcro a liberar di Cristo:
Tal che in fronte alle turbe infide e stolte,
Che sparsa avean di sè tremenda fama,
L' Ordrisia Luna s' ecclissò più volte;
E sì troncata fu l' iniqua trama
Che la città che le scacciò con l' armi
'Città Vittoriosa' ancor si chiama.
Io resi degni di perpetui carmi
Que' Duci ch'al più Sant' Ordine ascritti
Augusti templi ornar di bronzi e marmi,
E a render più sicuri i patrii dritti
Formar nell' arduo inespugnabil sito
Muniti porti e baluardi invitti.
Io resi industre il popolo imperito,
Tal che per lui nel freddo e nell' ardenza
Lo steril sasso ancor divien fiorito;
E sì lo prosperai di mia presenza
Che, mentre Europa avea miseria e guerra,
Quì fiorivan la pace e l' opulenza.
Io fei cenno da lungi all' Inghilterra,
E commisine il freno a quella destra
Che lo scettro de' mari in pugno serra.

Ed or che il vizio infetta ogni terreno
Melita che virtù non mai discaccia
La virtù sventurata accoglie in seno.
Tu vi discendi: io ti farò la traccia:
Vedrai, figlio, vedrai come a te inerme
Amorosa accoglienza apra le braccia.
Nè l' aspe infausto e il velenoso verme
Temer del vizio all' altrui danno intesi,
Ch'io là distrussi d' ogni serpe il germe."
Disse, e su me vibrò più lampi accesi
Che in sen mi ravvivâr gli spirti oppressi;
Nella nube ei si chiuse, a terra io scesi,
E sull' ospite sponda un bacio impressi.

12 *Agosto* 1821.

F.

NAPOLEONE A SANT' ELENA

Mira, Ocean, quel principe son io
Temuto in guerra qual fragor del tuono,
Che, a sua voglia togliendo e dando il trono,
Turba d' imbelli rè spinse all' obblio.
Un trono io m' ebbi; e non mel diede in dono
La sognata dai rè grazia di Dio;
A un nume de' miei pari, al brando mio,
Terror dell' orbe, debitor ne sono.
Il Destin quì mi trasse, e non l' Ispano,
Il Prusso, il gel di Scizia, o i rè tremanti,
Nè il fulmine temprato in Vaticano.
Ma quì pur grande. E dov' è mai chi vanti
Per sua prigione aver l' ampio Oceano,
E per custodi suoi tutt' i regnanti?

1835?

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